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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2005

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Sergeant saved dozens; first awarded for Iraq war

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State of the Union address



**Main themes:
World liberty
and Social
Security**

Domestic policy
dominates;
Bush points to
Iraq progress

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First lady Laura Bush applauds as Safia Talob al-Suhail, leader of the Iraqi Women's Political Council, back to camera, hugs Janet Norwood of Pflugerville, Texas, on Wednesday during President Bush's State of the Union address in Washington. Norwood's son, Marine Sgt. Byron Norwood, was killed in Iraq on Nov. 13. Al-Suhail's father was killed 11 years ago by Saddam Hussein's regime.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Pope's illness: The Turkish man who shot Pope John Paul II in 1981 released a cryptic statement Thursday wishing the hospitalized pontiff a speedy recovery and urging him to tell the world that its end was near.

Mehmet Ali Agca was extradited to Turkey in 2000 after serving almost 20 years in Italy for the May 13, 1981, shooting of the pope in St. Peter's Square. Agca fired two shots, one of which hit the pope in the abdomen as he rode through the square in an open car.

Agca's motives for the attack remain unclear. The pope later forgave Agca for the attack during a meeting.

Mauritania coup trial: A court in Mauritania ended a mass coup trial on Thursday, condemning the alleged mastermind of three failed coup attempts and three others to life in prison but passing down no death sentences.

Three main opposition leaders were acquitted, including Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla, a former military dictator who overthrew current President Maouya Sid'Ahmed Ould Taya two decades ago and lost a presidential race against him in 2003.

In all, 181 people have been on trial since November in this Sahara desert nation for involvement in three separate coup attempts between 2003 and 2004.

Communist symbols ban: A group of conservative European Union lawmakers from Western Europe called Thursday for a ban on communist symbols, including the red star and the hammer and sickle, to match a proposed EU ban on the Nazi swastika.

The group from Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic said the communist symbols should be included in any ban because of the suffering caused by Soviet-backed regimes in eastern Europe.

EU Justice and Home Affairs Commissioner Franco Frattini has proposed a Europe-wide ban on display of the swastikas and other Nazi symbols as part of a campaign to combat anti-Semitism and intolerance.

Serb war crimes: A top Serbian general indicted for war crimes in Kosovo flew Thursday to the Netherlands to surrender to a U.N. tribunal there in response to intense Western pressure.

Gen. Vladimir Lazarevic, one of four commanders indicted for alleged atrocities by Serbian troops during the 1998-99 crackdown against separatist Kosovo Albanians, boarded a government-provided flight to The Hague, his lawyer said.

Lazarevic has denied any wrongdoing since the charges were issued in late 2003, and insisted he was only doing his duty during a separatist insurgency.

Philippines kidnapping: A Muslim extremist has been arrested for the alleged abduction of 20 people in the Philippines, including three Americans, and for the suspected involvement in an attack that killed more than 50 Filipinos, officials said Thursday.

Aminul Jilani, a suspected member of the extremist Abu Sayyaf group, was arrested Tuesday after days of surveillance by Philippine intelligence agents, said Police Superintendent Felipe Candelario. Jilani was wanted in connection with the kidnapping of 20 people from the Dos Palmas resort in May 2001, and a 1995 rebel assault on Ippol town in Zamboanga Sibugay province.

U.N. oil-for-food report: Former U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker says



Palestinian prisoner release: An elite unit of the Palestinian Police trains in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Thursday. Israeli Cabinet ministers on Thursday approved the release of 900 Palestinian prisoners and a military pullout from the West Bank town of Jericho within days, in overtures ahead of next week's Mideast summit.

his investigation of corruption in the oil-for-food program in Iraq found that program director Benon Sevan engaged in "an irreconcilable conflict of interest" by choosing the companies that bought Saddam Hussein's oil.

Volcker's first report, as outlined by an official close to the investigation and by Volcker himself in an op-ed article in Thursday's Wall Street Journal, found the \$60 billion program "tainted" from top to bottom.

Volcker said in the article that program managers, auditors, contractors hired to oversee the program's operation and those who controlled U.N. expenditures for it, all failed "to follow the established rules of the organization designed to assure fairness and accountability."

Ukraine PM hearing postponed: Parliament in Kiev, Ukraine, postponed a confirmation hearing Thursday on Yulia Tymoshenko's nomination as prime minister, as behind-the-scenes negotiations continued over who would fill the Cabinet of Ukraine's new President Viktor Yushchenko.

Adam Martynik, deputy parliament speaker, said lawmakers would reconvene on Friday. He cited "heated consultations" as the cause of the delay, but did not elaborate.

Tymoshenko needs approval from a simple majority of Ukraine's 450 members of parliament — a proportion lawmakers said she should easily win.

States

Rudolph bombing case: Pieces of the bomb that killed a police officer outside an Alabama abortion clinic matched a detonator described in an explosives book ordered by bombing suspect Eric Rudolph, prosecutors say.

The government also says a handwriting expert matched Rudolph's handwriting to cryptic notes jotted in his Bible, which included the words "eye for eye" and "Christian Soldiers requirement."

Prosecutors detailed the evidence in documents filed late Monday asking a judge to reject a defense request for a hearing on whether the words "eye for eye" should be allowed in Rudolph's upcoming trial.

Mayor's re-election upheld: A state judge upheld the re-election of San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy, rejecting arguments that election officials improperly excluded thousands of write-in ballots for his closest chal-

lenger.

Superior Court Judge Michael Brenner heard arguments by supporters of Donna Frey, a maverick city councilwoman, that the San Diego County registrar of voters should have counted 5,551 ballots, which could have tipped the election. Murphy won by 2,108 votes.

Boat sinking investigation: A crab boat that sank in the Bering Sea last month was carrying too much weight and the captain had a history of overloading the vessel, according to Coast Guard investigators in Anchorage, Alaska.

Five men on board the Big Valley died Jan. 15, the opening of the ophi crab season, when the vessel sank 70 miles west of St. Paul Island, one of the Pribilof Islands. Investigators said they cannot conclude that overloading caused the sinking. However, they said the 92-foot vessel was hauling more heavy crab traps, called pots, than were allowed on the boat's "stability letter," a document prepared last year by a professional maritime consultant that spells out how to load the boat safely.

Blake trial testimony: When Ronald Blake's wife was slain, detectives searching for living quarters found foot lockers crammed with letters from "customers" of her mail-order sex scam but decided not to investigate most of them, the lead detective on the case testified.

Ronald testified in Los Angeles Wednesday that he decided to leave behind most of the letters, which were later discovered by Blake's first attorney, Harland Braun, who publicly revealed them and delivered them to police. Braun contended any of the men billed by Bonnie Lee Bakley could be suspects in her murder.

Church abuse trial: The defense for a defrocked priest accused of child rape amounted to a sole witness: a psychologist who discussed how some repressed memories are really false ones.

Dr. Elizabeth Loftus, a psychologist from the University of California at Irvine, testified that her research shows implanted ideas or suggestions can end up being believed as real by people.

The case against Shanley hinges on one man who contends he was repeatedly sexually abused by Shanley, his parish priest, when he was child.

Stories and photo from the Associated Press

Attacks leave 26 Iraqis, 2 Marines dead

Injuries reported in attacks in cities across the country

BY JASON KEYSER

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Insurgents struck back with a vengeance following a post-election lull, killing at least 26 Iraqis and two Marines in new attacks, and the first partial election results, released Thursday, showed the Shiite clerical-endorsed ticket running strong as expected.

The partial results came from 1.6 million votes counted so far in Baghdad and five others of Iraq's 18 provinces. The United Iraqi Alliance, which is backed by the country's most influential Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, had 1.1 million votes, and the list led by interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's list was second with more than 360,500 votes.

The figures showed the alliance leading over Allawi in all six provinces but were too small to indicate a national trend. The results came from 25 percent of the votes cast in Baghdad and partial counts from five Shiite-dominated provinces, where the Alliance had been expected to do well.

The commission has said it could take up to seven to 10 days from Sunday's election to produce full official results. So far, tallies from 10 percent of the country's polling stations have been counted, it said.

Seats in the 275-member National Assembly will be allocated by the percentage of the nationwide vote that each faction wins.

Around 1.4 million Iraqis were eligible in the election, but turnout is still not known, so it was not known what percentage of the total vote 1.6 million ballots would be.

Iraqi election officials said Thursday they sent a team to Mosul to look into allegations of voting irregularities in Nineveh province, a largely Sunni region. Complaints have included polling stations running short of ballots, confusion over the poll locations and ongoing military operations. It was not clear how many voters were affected.

Shiites, who make up about 60 percent of Iraq's estimated 26 mil-

lion people, turned out in large numbers in Sunday's balloting, eager to turn their majority into political power.

But many in the Sunni Arab minority stayed away, raising fears the outcome could further alienate them and continue to fuel the Sunni-led insurgency.

Insurgents had eased up on attacks following the elections, when American and Iraqi forces imposed sweeping security measures. But starting Wednesday night, guerrillas launched a string of dramatic attacks.

In the deadliest incident, insurgents stopped a minibus south of Kirkuk, ordered army recruits off the vehicle and gunned down 12 of them, said Maj. Gen. Anwar Mohammed Amin. Two soldiers were allowed to go free, ordered by the rebels to warn others against joining Iraq's U.S.-backed security forces, he said.

The assassins identified themselves as members of Takfir wa Hijra, the name of an Islamic group that emerged in the 1960s in Egypt, rejecting society as corrupt and seeking to establish a utopian Islamic community.

Elsewhere, gunmen fired on a vehicle carrying Iraqi contractors Thursday to jobs at a U.S. military base in Baquba north of the capital, killing two people, officials said.

A suicide car bomber struck a foreign convoy escorted by military Humvees on Baghdad's dangerous airport road Thursday, destroying several vehicles and damaging a house, Iraqi police said. Helicopters were seen evacuating some casualties, witnesses said. There was no immediate comment from the U.S. military.

Insurgents ambushed another convoy in the area, killing five Iraqi policemen and an Iraqi National Guard major, police said.

Also, the bodies of two slain men wearing blood-soaked clothes were found in the western insurgent stronghold of Ramadi. A handwritten note tucked into the shirt of one of the men claimed the two were Iraqi National Guardsmen.

Car bombs also targeted a



An Iraqi girl is treated Thursday by a U.S. Army soldier after a car bomb targeting a Army convoy exploded, causing minor injuries to two soldiers and six children in Mosul, Iraq. Insurgents struck back after a post-election lull, wlaying a minibus carrying new Iraqi army recruits, detonating car bombs, firing on Iraqis going to work at a U.S. base and gunning down an Iraqi soldier, officials said.

AP

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, at least 1,437 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,100 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The AP count includes four military civilians and is one higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Wednesday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Poland, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had begun, 1,299 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 991 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

- A Marine was killed in an action Wednesday in Anbar province.

- The latest identifications reported by the military:
- Army Staff Sgt. Joseph E. Rodriguez, 25, Las Cruces, N.M.; killed Friday in Baghdad when an explosive struck his armored vehicle; assigned to the 8th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

- Army Spc. Lyle W. Rymen

- II, 24, Fort Smith, Ark.; killed Friday in hostile action in Baghdad; assigned to the Army National Guard's 239th Engineer Company, 39th Infantry Brigade, Booneville, Ark.

- Army civilian Barbara Head, 60, Falls Church, Va.; killed Saturday in Baghdad when a mortar hit the Republic National Palace; worked for Army's Project and Contracting Office, Finance.

- Killed Monday in hostile action in Babil province; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.;

- Marine Lance Cpl. Jason C. Redfiter, 19, Stuarts Draft, Va.

- Marine Lance Cpl. Harry R. Swain IV, 21, Cumberland, N.J.

- Marine Cpl. Christopher E. Zimny, 27, Glenview, Ill.

house used by U.S. military snipers in Qaim, near the Syrian border, a U.S. convoy in Mosul and British troops in the southern city of Basra. Two soldiers were wounded in the Mosul blast. Scattered clashes erupted between U.S. troops and insurgents in Mosul throughout the day, and an

anti-tank mine struck a U.S. Strike armored vehicle, but there was no word on casualties.

Other attacks in Baghdad, the northern town of Tal Afar and the southern city of Samawah killed four Iraqis. A roadside bomb exploded near the car of the governor of Anbar province Thursday

in Ramadi. Gov. Qasab al-Namawi was not harmed, but a woman was injured when his guards opened fire.

Both Marines were killed in clashes Wednesday in Anbar province, which includes such restive cities and towns as Ramadi, Fallujah and Qaim.

Wolfowitz praises Iraq security forces in testimony

BY LIZ SIDOTI

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The fledgling Iraqi security forces have already made an enormous contribution toward keeping the country safe, but "much work clearly needs to be done," the deputy defense secretary told U.S. lawmakers Thursday.

"Iraqi security forces lack many of the capabilities that our forces demonstrate so well," Paul Wolfowitz told the Senate Armed Services Committee. "However, Iraqi forces bring to the fight skills that our soldiers will never possess, particularly

their understandings of the languages and cultures of Iraq."

Wolfowitz told the committee that the United States must intensify its efforts to help Iraq organize, train, equip and mentor its own security forces.

Wolfowitz said the White House's request for \$80 billion in additional money for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will include "a substantial funding request for training an Iraqi military."

"We are counting on your support," he said.

Wolfowitz acknowledged that the training "has encountered countless challenges and suffered numerous setbacks."

But, he said, Sunday's elections showed that progress has been made in training. He said Iraqi soldiers "courageously thwarted" the insurgency's effort to disrupt the voting.

"As impressive as Sunday's election was, Iraq still faces a difficult road ahead to defeat the terrorist threat and achieve stability, much less freedom and democracy," Wolfowitz said.

He warned lawmakers that the next few months would be particularly challenging as the Iraqi government takes shape.

"This is not a time to sit on our hands con-

gratulating ourselves, nor to declare victory and abandon a task that is only half accomplished," Wolfowitz said.

Wolfowitz stressed that to ensure a democratic state required a partnership between Iraq, the United States and its allies. He also said success required that Iraqis themselves work out differences among various Iraqi factions, and the United States should use enormous influence to "remind Iraqis of the importance of resolving these issues in ways that preserve national unity in the face of a ruthless enemy."

He said the United States should not use its influence to advance its own agenda.

7 British soldiers to be tried in Iraqi's death

BY ED JOHNSON

The Associated Press

LONDON — Seven British soldiers will stand trial on charges of murder for the killing of an Iraqi civilian in 2003, Britain's attorney general said Thursday.

Lord Goldsmith said the soldiers would face court-martial in connection with the death of Nadhem Abdulah on May 11, 2003, in Al Uzzayra in southern Iraq. He gave no further details of the man's death, other than that it occurred at a roadside.

The seven soldiers were members of the 3rd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, Goldsmith said in a statement to Parliament.

Corporal Scott Evans, Private

William Nerney and Daniel Harding, who is now a civilian, together with four men whose names have not yet been disclosed, have been charged with murder and violent disorder, the statement said.

No date was set for a court-martial or preliminary hearing.

Meanwhile, prosecutors at a British base in Germany dropped the remaining charge against one of three soldiers standing trial on allegations of abusing Iraqi captives on Thursday, saying they couldn't prove he was the one who forced two detainees to strip and simulate sex acts.

Lance Cpl. Darren Larkin, 30, has already pleaded guilty to one

count of battery after prosecutors alleged he was the man shown in a photo standing with both feet on a tied-up Iraqi lying on the ground. Prosecutors dropped a second charge after a witness said he was unsure about his identification of Larkin.

Charges of aiding and abetting Larkin also were dropped against Cpl. Daniel Kenyon, 33, who still has five charges remaining against him. He has denied the charges.

Larkin, Kenyon and Lance Cpl. Mark Cooley, all from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, are facing charges they abused Iraqis detained on suspicion of looting a humanitarian aid warehouse outside Basra in May 2003.

According to transcripts read in court, Cooley told investigators he was using the forklift to take the captive to a shady area. He admitted pretending to push him to the film, saying he thought the photo "would be something to take back, something to boast about."

The trial revolves around photos taken by a soldier who was arrested in England after bringing the film to developed. The pictures provoked widespread dismay in Britain after they were published in newspapers, leading to uncomfortable comparisons with the scandal over abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad.

A fourth soldier, Fusilier Gary

Bartram, who took the photos that prompted the investigation, has been sentenced in the case.

The judge, Michael Hunter, has imposed restrictions on Bartram's trial that bar reporting of details.

Britain, which has some 9,000 troops in Iraq, has launched 160 investigations into deaths and injuries since the U.S.-led invasion, ranging from incidents such as road traffic accidents to people injured when soldiers returned fire.

The majority of those investigations have been closed with no further action being taken; 48 are ongoing and prosecuting authorities are currently discussing whether a further nine cases should be brought forward for prosecution, the defense department said.



U.S. Army Sgt. Javal S. Davis and his attorney, Paul Bergin, arrive Thursday at the courthouse for Davis' sentencing hearing in Fort Hood, Texas. Davis pleaded guilty to battery and two other charges in connection with the prisoner abuse scandal at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

Witness in Abu Ghraib trial calls prison conditions dire

BY T.A. BADGER

The Associated Press

FORT HOOD, Texas — Abu Ghraib prison took a toll both on its thousands of inmates and the relatively few soldiers who guarded them, according to a witness who testified in the penalty phase for a military policeman who has pleaded guilty to abusing detainees.

Army Maj. David Dinenna, a leader of Sgt. Javal Davis' military police battalion, called conditions there "deplorable," with shortages of food, water and clothing as well as frequent mortar attacks and prisoner flare-ups.

"It was filthy, with rodents, rats, wild dogs and trash and an overpopulation of prisoners," Dinenna said Wednesday.

Davis, 27, a reservist from Roselle, N.J., pleaded guilty Tuesday to battery, dereliction of duty and lying to Army investigators as part of a deal with prosecutors.

The former guard faces a maximum 6½ years in prison for his crimes, but defense lawyer Paul Bergin has said that the plea deal caps Davis' sentence at 18 months.

Capt. Chuck Neill, a prosecution spokesman, said the jury's sentence recommendation will be compared to the deal offered to Davis, and the lesser sentence will be served.

Earlier in the hearing, prosecutors played a tape for the nine-man Army jury in which Davis responded to questions from the judge on Tuesday about

what he did to seven handcuffed and hooded prisoners in November 2003.

In the tape, Davis admitted he stepped on the hands and feet of detainees and that he later fell with his full weight on them.

Davis said he knew his actions were wrong and that the abuse was not carried out as part of an approved regimen prior to interrogation, as other accused Abu Ghraib guards have claimed.

He said he saw prisoners being physically mistreated and sexually humiliated, but that he failed to help them or report the abuse, as required under military law. He also admitted lying to an Army investigator when he denied his misdeeds.

Davis also spoke of dangers faced by guards at Abu Ghraib, including prisoners armed with homemade knives. He blamed job stress for his wrongful acts.

Under cross-examination, Dinenna agreed that guards at other U.S.-run detention facilities in Iraq faced similar conditions but didn't abuse prisoners. Bergin said he will likely call Davis to testify, and he will present videotaped testimony from Iraqi detainees who say Davis treated them well.

The first of those detainees described Davis in his brief recorded testimony as a "peaceful man." Five other soldiers have already pleaded guilty in the case and been sentenced. Two others — Spc. Sabrina Harman and Pfc. Lynndee England — still face trial. The only case to reach trial was that of Pvt. Charles Graner, described as the abuse ringleader. Graner was convicted in January and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Report: Tapes show riot squads subduing Gitmo terror suspects

BY PAISLEY DODDS

The Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Videotapes of riot squads subduing troublesome terror suspects at the U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo Bay show the guards punching some detainees, tying one to a gurney for questioning and forcing a dozen to strip from the waist down, according to a secret report.

One squad was all-female, traumatizing some Muslim prisoners.

Investigators from U.S. Southern Command in Miami, which oversees the camp in Cuba, wrote the report that was obtained by The Associated Press after spending a little more than a week in June reviewing 20 hours of videotapes involving immediate Reaction Forces.

The camp's lay-out prevented videotaping in all the cells, where the five-prisoner teams operated, the report said. Reviewers said they did not look at all of the available videotapes.

Although the report cited several cases of physical force, reviewers said they found no evidence of systemic detainee abuse, according to the six-page summary dated June 19, 2004. An official familiar with the report authenticated it, speaking to AP on condition of anonymity.

The tapes raised questions about mistreatment and misconduct, however, said the investigators, who suggested some clips needed more scrutiny to rule out abuse. The military has cited 10 substantiated cases of abuse at Guantanamo, and announced

Tuesday an extension would be granted for an investigation to interview of witnesses in the United States and abroad.

One such clip the investigators flagged was from Feb. 17, 2004.

It showed "one or more" team members punching a detainee "on an area of his body that seemingly would be inconsistent with striking a pressure point," which is a suspected tactic for subduing prisoners.

In five other clips showing detainees who appeared to have been punched by team members, the investigators said: "The punching was in line with accepted law enforcement practice of striking the pressure point on the back of the thigh to temporarily distract the detainee."

Investigators also noted about a dozen cases in which detainees were stripped from the waist down and taken to the "Romeo block," of the camp. No female guards were involved, they said.

Romeo block is a camp section where prisoners were often left naked for days, according to two former detainees, Britons Shafiq Rasul and Asif Iqbal, who were released last year.

Although no female guards were videotaped in any of the stripping cases, investigators cautioned the U.S. government about using the all-female team to handle disruptive detainees, citing religious and cultural differences. Many of the prisoners are Muslim men and under strict interpretations of Islamic view contact with other women other than their wives as taboo.

Investigators cautioned the U.S. government about using the all-female team to handle disruptive detainees, citing religious and cultural differences.

Official says U.S. troops in Iraq face uncertainty

BY KIMBERLY HEFLING
The Associated Press

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. — The commanding general of the 101st Airborne Division says his troops face an uncertain mission in Iraq after the country's historic elections, which many Iraqis hope will usher in democracy and hasten the departure of 150,000 American troops.

The 101st is scheduled to return to Iraq this fall with more than 20,000 troops — about 60 percent of them combat veterans from Afghanistan or Iraq, Maj. Gen. Tom Turner told The Associated Press during an interview in his office here.

He said it's not yet clear whether his troops will take an advisory role to help Iraqi forces, or an offensive role against insurgents.

"Defining what we do operationally has yet to be done," Turner said.

The 101st will deploy with a newly created 4th Brigade, 2,000 additional trucks and more training in the Arab culture than the first time. They will leave behind 58,000 family members.

Turner, 52, said it's unlikely that the 101st would return to northern Iraq, where it settled for nearly a year after participating in the 2003 invasion.

The 101st, which first parachuted on Normandy on D-Day in World War II, has evolved into a rapid-deployment division known for its fleet of helicopters that transport troops and equipment. It is based on the Tennessee border at Fort Campbell, which has had more than 60 soldiers die in the Iraq war.

"I think everybody's got to be pretty excited about what you've seen on TV and what you're hearing on the news," Turner said of the election.

"To see the Iraqi reaction is pretty heartening, and if the threats were halfway accurate, then you have to be really proud of the security that was put in place."

Much of the security for Sunday's Iraq election was conducted by Iraqi forces.



Turner



PHOTOS BY JASON CHUDY/Stars and Stripes

Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment stop during a patrol through Abu Ghraib's market recently. They are, from left, Sgt. Joel Fredrickson, 1st Lt. Omar Minott, Spc. Luis Chavira and Cpl. Christopher Culler. The unit's members, who are fighting insurgents in the town, play insurgents themselves when they're back at their home base of Fort Polk, La.

Fake insurgents fight real ones

Ft. Polk GIs once played the enemy in training; now, tables are turned

BY JASON CHUDY
Stars and Stripes

BAGHDAD — Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment have more experience attacking American troops than most Iraqi insurgents do.

When not in Iraq with the 10th Mountain Division, the 509th soldiers play enemy troops at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La., providing realistic training on insurgent tactics for units deploying there, said 1st Lt. R. Dennis Eller, Company B executive officer.

"We play Iraqi citizens," he said. "We occupy a village and hang out ... and set up [insurgent] cells in the village."

Once they're out in the Louisiana wilderness, the 509th will spend 10 days attacking American troops with simulated mortars, gunfire and roadside bombs, giving them a concentrated, but harmless, version of what they'll face in Iraq.

The units try to counter the 509th's actions with everything from combat operations and civil affairs projects to getting the local religious leader on their side. The imam is played by the battalion's chaplain.

The 509th has assumed the role of the opposing forces for many major U.S. deployments, such as to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Soldiers from both Company A and Company B say their experience as insurgents has helped them on their deployment to Iraq. "It helps tremendously," said Eller.

During his first patrol, he explained, they came across a house that they were told had previously held weapons caches. When 509th soldiers searched it themselves, they came across four more caches.

"It looked like the type of stuff we'd do," Eller explained.

Spc. Michael Hickok of Company A said they've been able to find more roadside bombs — called IEDs by soldiers — and weapons caches than many other units because of their experience at Fort Polk.

"The spots where they place them is where we'd place them," he said. "[We'll say] 'Ooh, that looks like a good spot for an IED.' We'll go and there's an IED there. That's happened a couple of times."

Their training and experience isn't foolproof, however. One of Company A's soldiers was recently killed by a roadside bomb in the company's Abu Ghraib patrol sector.

But the two companies patrol some of the toughest parts in their battalion's sector. For Company A, it's in downtown Abu Ghraib; Company B's area is just



First Lt. R. Dennis Eller, executive officer of Company B, 1st Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, throws packages of colored pencils to youngsters outside the unit's Geromino base before Sunday's elections in Iraq. Eller said that small gestures can bring people over to the coalition side in the fight against insurgents in Iraq.

north of Baghdad's Haifa Street, the scene of many recent fights.

"We've been on their asses pretty tough," said Company A's Staff Sgt. Brian Morris about the insurgents.

When the companies head back to Fort Polk in the next few months, they'll bring back a firsthand understanding of how the Iraqi insurgent operates. This is the largest deployment of the

509th's soldiers since World War II.

"We'll be able to give them the most accurate representation of what the Iraqi theater looks like," said Eller about units deploying through JRTC. "It's going to be great for ... units coming through because they'll get a level of training they've never had before."

E-mail Jason Chudy at: chudy@mail.estrates.osd.mil

GI to get posthumous Medal of Honor

The Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — A soldier credited with saving dozens of lives by beating back an Iraqi attack before he was killed will receive the first Medal of Honor of the Iraq war, according to the officer who nominated him.

Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith, 33, of the Tampa Bay area, was killed in action when his outnumbered unit was attacked by Iraqi forces at the Baghdad airport on April 4, 2003.

Lt. Col. Thomas Smith on Tuesday notified the soldier's wife, Birgit, that President Bush would present the nation's highest military award to her and their children, Jessica, 18, and David, 10, at a White House ceremony, possibly in March.

"People know that to get a Medal of Honor, you have to be a special person or do something really great."

No official announcement had been made by the Pentagon as of Wednesday.

"This is a guy whose whole life experience seemed building toward putting him in the position where he could do something like this," said Thomas Smith, who is not related to the fallen soldier.

"He was demanding on his soldiers all the time and was a stickler for all the

things we try to enforce. It's just an amazing story."

Paul Smith, with Bravo Company of the 11th Engineer Battalion from Port Stewart, Ga., was helping build a holding pen for a growing number of prisoners when he climbed aboard an armored personnel carrier and manned its 50-caliber machine gun to cover for fellow troops.

Birgit Smith
soldier's wife

Smith fired more than 300 rounds and the ceramic breast plate in his flak jacket was shattered as he returned fire from automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades.

He was the only American who died in the attack.

"People know what he's done," Smith's wife said.

"People know that to get a Medal of Honor, you have to be a special person or do something really great."

Since the Civil War, 3,439 men and one woman have received the Medal of Honor, awarded for bravery "above and beyond the call of duty."

It was last presented to two soldiers killed in Somalia during action described in the book and movie "Black Hawk Down."



Courtesy to Stars and Stripes

Tiffany Petty, left, whose husband Jerick was killed while serving in Iraq, and Jennifer McCollum, whose husband Dan died in a Marine plane crash in Pakistan, testified before the Senate Veterans Affairs committee Thursday about problems receiving military death benefits.

Widows recount to Congress problems with death benefits

BY LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Too often, casualty assistance officers don't have the financial and technical information families need when a servicemember is killed, a panel of military widows told Congress on Thursday.

"My assistance officer did the absolute best he could to help me, but he was not educated in the things that came after the funeral, things like insurance, social security, benefits available for my children," said Tiffany Petty, whose husband Jerick was killed in a December 2003 firefight outside of Mosul.

"The soldiers who were with my husband in Iraq were the ones who got me a military ID card," Petty said. She said those soldiers also "were there when I needed someone to talk to, when I needed to hear things about his service." Petty and other widows were on hand to testify before the Senate

Veterans Affairs committee about the shortcomings in military death benefits, and ways to ease the bureaucratic hurdles families face after a servicemember's death.

Members of the National Military Families Association and the Gold Star Wives of America complained about inconsistencies with medical coverage, confusing deadlines to switch insurance policies and a lack of resources for survivors to answer their questions.

Jennifer McCollum, whose husband Dan was killed in a plane crash in Pakistan in January 2002, told senators her medical coverage has been disrupted twice over the last three years and she was never informed about financial and legal support services.

At one point, she moved from Florida to California to be closer to an available military treatment facility, only to find out a few

months later she could no longer use those medical services.

"I am discovering that casualty assistance is increasingly falling miserably and disgracefully," she said. "Successful assistance is not the rule; it is quite the exception." Committee members said they are focused on not only improving the compensation side of military death benefits — several voiced support for increases in the death gratuity proposed by the Pentagon earlier in the week — but also on ensuring families' emotional needs.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said he would like to see those casualty assistance responsibilities referred in part to civilian counselors, who could provide more consistency than the ever-mobile active-duty personnel. Widows at the hearing also voiced support for supplying more comprehensive information on college tuition, tax issues and family counseling services.

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Pentagon drops plan to keep reservists on active-duty longer

BY MARK MAZZETTI
Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — Facing political pressure from members of Congress, the Pentagon has dropped consideration of a plan to increase the time reservists can spend on active duty, senior Defense officials said Wednesday.

Straining to meet upcoming troop needs in Iraq and Afghanistan, top Army generals had indicated recently that they would press the Defense Department's civilian leadership to lift a two-year limit on active-duty deployments for reservists. But the Pentagon's top civilian official in charge of personnel issues said Wednesday that the policy would not change.

"There are no plans to expand the mobilization period to a policy of 24 consecutive months," Undersecretary of Defense David S.C. Chu testified before the House Armed Services Committee.

In an interview after the hearing, Chu said that members of Congress told the Pentagon that such a change in policy would meet strong resistance on Capitol Hill.

Over the past year, lawmakers in both political parties have criticized Pentagon decisions to keep troops in the military after their commitments expire and to extend the deployments of troops in Iraq. Such moves amount to a "backdoor draft," they said.

A Pentagon policy enacted after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks limits the time that reservists and National Guard members can serve on active duty to 24 cumulative months. Some in the Army, including Army Reserve Chief Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly, pressed for the policy to change that to 24 consecutive months — which would allow reservists to serve multiple two-year stints.

With nearly 50 percent of the U.S. force in Iraq comprising reservists, Army officials are struggling to find enough soldiers to fill out units for the next rotation



Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly

of troops beginning this fall, a process known within the Pentagon as "Operation Iraq Freedom 4."

Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard Cody said the military would be able to replace troops scheduled in Iraq beginning this fall, "but it will be painful," he said.

In a recent memorandum to Army leaders, Helmly said that of the 205,000 soldiers on the Army Reserve's rolls, only about 37,500 were available to fulfill missions needed for Iraq.

The Reserve forces, Helmly wrote, "were rapidly degenerating into a broken force." But at Wednesday's hearing, Chu took issue with the numbers cited by Helmly, saying that the available pool of reservists was higher. Helmly did not count reservists currently training to be deployed or those who have served six months or less since the Sept. 11 attacks, Chu said.

Army officials also said that the Reserve and National Guard were struggling to meet their 2005 recruiting goals, and that 2,200 additional recruiters have been hired to boost the number of citizen soldiers. The Army National Guard is 15,000 soldiers below its normal strength and is hoping to make up the difference by September. Last month, the Guard met only 56 percent of its monthly recruiting goal.

GIs learn how to face enemy hand-to-hand

Babenhhausen hosts jujitsu instructors

BY JESSICA INIGO

Stars and Stripes

BABENHAUSEN, Germany — It took only one trip to Iraq to make it clear to the 1st Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment that weapons are not always the best tool in a fight.

In tight spaces, face to face with an enemy, a soldier might not be able to raise his 3-foot-long M16 rifle fast enough. So he needs defensive tactics and hand-to-hand combat techniques to get the upper hand.

That's the message brought to some of the regiment's troops by the Gracie family.

The grappling Gracies are known worldwide for bringing their style of Brazilian jujitsu to the forefront with no-holds-barred fights at the Ultimate Fighting Championships. That reputation prompted the Babenhhausen troops to tap the Gracies for a

weeklong training course.

The goal was to train the trainees, so 1-27th troops could go on to teach their soldiers.

"It's amazing to be working

with these guys. It's a real honor," said Spec. Michael Leonhardt, who was one of 30 troops selected from the four batteries to train with the Gracie father-and-son team, who came from their Los Angeles academy.

"This is definitely something I'll be able to teach troops in the future that will actually help when deployed. It's amazing to be learning techniques that I could have used in situations I encountered in Iraq. This is completely worthwhile," Leonhardt said.

This is the first time the Gracie family has taught in Germany, but it's not the first time the Army has tapped the family for self-defense training.

About 12 years ago, Rorion Gracie said, he taught infantrymen with the 2nd Ranger Battalion out of Fort Lewis, Wash. Today, he said, this style of self-defense is

one way the Army ignites a "warrior ethos" throughout its ranks. Gracie's style of jujitsu is about knowing how to subdue an opponent effectively, without the use of excessive force.

Rorion and his son, Ryon Gracie, (pronounced "Brazilian way, with the beginning 'R' making an 'H' sound.) tag-teamed to show troops that in most situations, technique outweighs strength. About 90 percent of close-quarter combat could be handled by a soldier subduing his enemy, without ever having to raise his weapon, they said.

Rorion Gracie said he tells his students to assume their enemies will always be bigger and stronger. That way, they are trained to take anyone down.

"Soldiers could find themselves in situations where they may have to use lethal force one moment and the next moment be restrained. This training helps them avoid accusations that they used more force than necessary," Rorion Gracie said. All they need is proper self-defense training, he said.

"I think these soldiers are doing wonderful. It's a new concept for them, but it's applicable to their job. The weapon is a great tool, but without self-confidence, which this training instills, they could end up being a quick trigger," Rorion Gracie said.

Maj. Will Daniel, commander of the 1-27th Battery A, found the Gracie academy military training online. The course is called G.R.A.P.L.E. — or Gracie Resisting Attack Procedures for Law Enforcement.

The applications of G.R.A.P.L.E. techniques are both humane and lethal, depending on the circumstances, according to the Web site. After seeing the Web site, Daniel contacted the academy and invited them to Germany.

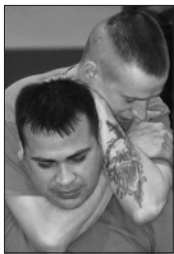
Ryon Gracie, who has never taught outside the States, said he was impressed at how quickly the Babenhhausen troops picked up the defensive tactics and arrest-and-control procedures.

"We review every day and then we add another piece to the puzzle to make the training easy to learn and complete. It's all about repetition and doing it right and these guys are doing wonderful



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 27th Field Artillery practice jujitsu moves at the gym in Babenhhausen, Germany on Wednesday. Rorion Gracie, of Gracie Jiu-Jitsu Academy and Ultimate Fighting Championship fame, and his son Ryon, at center in gray shirt, have been teaching soldiers hand-to-hand combat this week.



Staff Sgt. Clifford Hartley has Staff Sgt. Larry Grijalva in a headlock as they lean a jujitsu move.

ly," said Ryon Gracie, 23. He is the oldest of six brothers and three sisters, who all teach at the Gracie Jiu-Jitsu Academy.

Rorion Gracie suggests military units using the G.R.A.P.L.E. techniques take a refresher course every six months to ensure proper performance. For more information on Gracie jujitsu and the Gracie family, go to www.gracieacademy.com.

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Training in martial arts key to Marine boot camp

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER

Stars and Stripes

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain — Marines are masters of some of the world's most lethal weapons.

But they also know how to take an enemy out with their hands because of a robust martial arts training regimen.

Martial art self-defense training is nothing new to the Corps.

Every Marine who goes through boot camp learns hand-to-hand combat skills that blend knife and bayonet fighting mixed in with some Brazilian jujitsu and judo. Since the Corps established a standardized training program in 2002, Marines have been expected to keep up the skills throughout their career. Units have their own instructors to help sustain proficiency.

Staff Sgt. Christopher Brown, a black belt instructor with the Rota-based Marine Corps Security Force Company Europe, said Marines by and large love the program and the chance to learn new techniques.

"It's something they look forward to," Brown said.

The Corps' martial arts training, however, includes more than just ways to take out an enemy. The program emphasizes the mental aspects of what the Marines call a "professional warrior."

Instructors preach the importance of good character, discipline and the ability to know when to use force and when not to use force.

"There's a lot more that goes into it that people who see us practice don't see," Brown said.

Every Marine who comes out of boot camp rises to the level of a tan belt, which is the first of five levels of training. However, they have the opportunity to rise to a black belt throughout their time in the Corps.

In Rota, Marines practice an average of two to three hours, two or three times a week, Brown said. The company has six to eight instructors to help the 184 Marines maintain their skills or jump to another level.

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Soldiers watch a movie after the dedication ceremony for the Morale, Welfare and Recreation movie theater at Forward Operating Base Warhorse in Baqouba, Iraq.

Iraq base theater dedicated to fallen soldier from Vilseck

BY STEVE LIEWER

Stars and Stripes

Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade last week dedicated the newly opened movie theater at Forward Operating Base Warhorse in Baqouba, Iraq, to a command sergeant major who died in the line of duty.

The base's Morale, Welfare and Recreation team opened the Faulkenburg Theater on Jan. 25 in memory of Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Faulkenburg, 45, who was shot and killed by insurgents Nov. 9 during the battle for Fallujah, according to a news release from the Tikrit-based Task Force Dugout.

The 154-seat theater will be open seven days a week, with four movie showings daily, the release said.

Department of Defense contractor KBR built the theater in 75 days, the release said. It also can be used for live performances, briefings or large meetings.

Faulkenburg, of Huntington, Ind., had been the senior enlisted soldier in the 1st ID's 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment.

He left behind a wife and three daughters at the unit's home base in Vilseck, Germany.

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General under fire for Afghanistan comments

BY JON R. ANDERSON

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Marine Corps Commandant chastised, but also defended one of his top commanders after video surfaced on NBC of the three-star general publicly saying it "it's fun to shoot some people."

"Actually, it's a lot of fun to fight. You know, it's a hell of a hoot. I like bawling," Lt. Gen. James Mattis told a gathering in San Diego during a panel discussion at the Convention Center there Wednesday.

Mattis has been a veteran of operations in Afghanistan, more recently led thousands of Marines into combat in Iraq as the commander of 1st Marine Division.

He's currently the head of the corps' Combat Development Command at Quantico, Va.

"You go into Afghanistan, you get guys who slap women around for five years because they didn't wear a veil," Mattis continued, according to the Web site of NBC's local affiliate in San Diego. "You know, it's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them."



Mattis

late in San Diego. "You know, guys like that ain't got no manhood left anyway. So it's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them."

Marine Commandant Gen. Mike Hagee responded Mattis' comments Thursday, saying he wished Mattis had been more careful with his comments.

"I have counseled him concerning his remarks and he agrees he should have chosen his words more carefully," reads Hagee's statement.

At the same time, however, Hagee defended his general.

"While I understand that some people may take issue with the comments made by him, I also know he intended to reflect the unfortunate and harsh realities of war. Lt. Gen. Mattis often speaks with a great deal of candor," wrote Hagee.

"Throughout our history, Marines have given their lives in the defense of this nation and human rights around the globe," continued Hagee.

"When necessary, this commitment helps to provide us the fortitude to take the lives of those who oppress others or threaten this nation's security. This is not something we relish, yet we accept it as a reality in our profession of arms."

Hagee gave no indication that Mattis would suffer any punishment.

"Lt. Gen. Mattis is a superb leader and one of the Corps most courageous and experienced warriors. I remain confident that he will continue to serve this nation with dedication and distinction."

Mattis was attending a panel discussion on lessons learned from Afghanistan and Iraq sponsored by the Armed Forces Communication and Electronics Association, according to Capt. Jeff Landis, a Quantico spokesman.

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Family, friends recall 1-4 Cav GI

BY STEVE LIEWER

Stars and Stripes

SCHWEINFURT, Germany — Sgt. William Scott Kinzer Jr. could count the days.

In barely a month, his unit would fly home to Germany. In less than two months, he would marry his fiancée, Melissa Milks, in Hendersonville, N.C.

It wasn't to be.

Kinzer, 27, of the 1st Infantry Division's 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, died Jan. 26 in Ad Duluyah, Iraq, just east of Samarra, when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his Humvee.

Many friends and fellow soldiers already home from Iraq gathered at an Army chapel in Schweinfurt in Kinzer's memory Wednesday, two days after his comrades at Forward Operating Base MacKenzie mourned him in Iraq.

"He was the type of person who was always there to lend a hand," said Pfc. Stephen Boudrey, who served with him, at the MacKenzie service, "a per-

son you could count on in battle and never worry if he had your back."

Kinzer grew up in the small town of Salem, S.C. He attended high school at Fletcher Academy, a Seventh Day Adventist private school near Asheville, N.C., where he was a gymnast and one of 23 in the graduating class, according to the Asheville Citizen-Times newspaper.

Kinzer enlisted in the Army March 20, 2001. He trained as a cavalry scout and was assigned to Troop B of the 1-4 Cavalry in Schweinfurt later that year.

Last spring, Kinzer deployed to Iraq with his unit. A few months ago, after completing 200 logistical supply missions with Troop B, he transferred to the 1-4 Cavalry's headquarters troop to become a Humvee driver and gunner for the unit's non-commissioned officer-in-charge, 1st Sgt. Brent Jurgensen.

On Jan. 26, Kinzer stood in the turret of Jurgensen's Humvee behind his M240B machine gun, part of a patrol inspecting polling places for the elections that

would be held four days later, said Capt. Jeff Paine, the troop commander.

As the patrol passed through an alley, Paine said, two insurgents jumped out and fired RPGs at Jurgensen's trail vehicle. Kinzer died instantly, along with the other three soldiers were injured.

"Freedom requires men like Sgt. William Scott Kinzer," said Lt. Col. Jim Chevallier, the 1-4 Cavalry commander, at the MacKenzie service, "a man who voluntarily served his nation in a time of war and always performed his duty, full well knowing the potential cost."

Kinzer's death hit the 1-4 Cavalry especially hard. It came one day after the unit's advance party flew home to a joyous reunion with families in Schweinfurt, heralding the return of the rest of the unit in a few weeks. He was the 10th 1-4 Cavalry trooper killed in action.

"It taught us all off guard. We didn't see it coming," said Capt. Gary Fisher, the battalion's chaplain, in his memorial meditation.



KHISTEN CHANDLER/TOTM/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Sgt. Robert Schwarz, a friend of Sgt. William Kinzer, speaks at the memorial and remembers his fallen comrade at a service for Kinzer on Wednesday at Ledward Barracks in Schweinfurt, Germany. Schwarz and Kinzer served together in Schweinfurt and in Iraq.

"The news of the dead and the wounded spread through the task force, snapping everyone back to the sober reality that you're not out of here until you're out of here."

Kinzer is survived by his par-

ents, William and Debra Kinzer; two sisters, Patricia and Katie, and his fiancée. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

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Marines' recruitment falls short, report says

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — For the first time in nearly a decade, the Marine Corps in January missed its monthly recruiting goal. The New York Times reported Thursday.

The Marines missed their January goal of 3,270 recruits by 84 people, or less than 3 percent. The Marines last missed a monthly goal in July 1995, and 1995 was also the last year the Corps missed its annual recruiting quota. Maj. Dave Griesmer, a spokesman for the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, told the Times.

Struggles of the Army and its reserves to recruit and retain soldiers have received national attention in recent months.

Senior Marine personnel officials told the Times that one month is hardly a trend and that

the Marine Corps is slightly ahead of plan for the fiscal year beginning last October and fully expects to meet their overall goal for the year.

Senior officers acknowledge that the drop in January — and close calls in November and December — could be linked to the widely publicized risks in Iraq.

Even as the Marine Corps strains to meet its recruiting targets, the Air Force and Navy are flush with recruits.

"It's not surprising that the Navy and Air Force would be doing just fine," said Richard H. Kohn, a military historian at the University of North Carolina. "Kids getting a start in the military will migrate to the physically safer services, and it seems to me that they'll get more technical training there."

Military bans personnel from Turkish village

The Associated Press

ISTANBUL, Turkey — The U.S. military has banned its personnel from going to bars, restaurants and shops located immediately outside an air base that it uses in southern Turkey amid security concerns after a bomb was found nearby, the military said Thursday.

The bomb, containing 11 pounds of explosives, was safely defused at a disco near the entrance of Incirlik air base late Tuesday, according to Turkish media reports. Some 1,400 U.S. troops are based at Incirlik as part of a NATO mission.

In response to the discovery, the U.S. military has banned its personnel from going to a strip of souvenir shops, restaurants and bars located just outside the base.

"Incirlik village and the alley will be off limits until further notice," according to a U.S. military statement.

Similar precautions have been taken recently

in the past, and soldiers are still allowed to travel to other areas not in the immediate vicinity of the base.

On Thursday, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported a man and woman suspected of planting the bomb were seen with another bag in their possession, raising fears that there could be a second bomb.

A spokesman for the local governor's office was not available for comment.

Authorities searched cars and checked identity cards in the area and the number of Turkish paramilitary police on duty in the area was increased, Anatolia said.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visits Turkey this weekend. Washington has expressed interest in expanding its use of the base, which is only an hour's flight from Iraq.

Militant leftist, Kurdish and Islamic groups are active in Turkey and have carried out past attacks.

Washington has expressed interest in expanding its use of the base, which is only an hour's flight from Iraq.

IN THE STATES

Bush pushes Social Security reform in speech

By DAVID ESPO

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Trying to build pressure on a wary Congress, President Bush campaigned Thursday for changes in Social Security that would combine reduced government benefits for younger workers with "a chance to build a nest egg" through personal accounts.

"We must make Social Security permanently sound, not leave that task for another day," Bush told lawmakers in a State of the Union address Wednesday night that elicited applause from Republicans and audible grumbles from Democrats in the audience.

With success in Congress far from assured, the president boarded Air Force One for a two-day, five-state trip to sell his program.

Each state he visits is represented in the Senate by at least one Democrat the administration hopes to sway on Social Security.

Bush's first stop was North Dakota, which he won heavily in last fall's election. Even so, early indications were not so positive this time.

"He's saying we've got to take more money out of Social Security to start private accounts and borrow the money," said Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., a target of Bush's travels. "I just think it's very wise."

Other Democrats said Bush's program could reduce guaranteed government benefits for younger Americans by 40 percent.



President Bush concludes his annual State of the Union speech before a joint session of Congress in Washington, on Wednesday. Vice President Dick Cheney, left, and Speaker of the House of Representatives Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., applaud in the background.

Bush offered no information on that point Wednesday night as he outlined his plans in broad strokes. Aides said that by leaving many key details vague, he intended to give GOP congressional leaders room to piece together legislation that can command a majority.

He laid down a few markers, though, saying he will not agree to increase payroll taxes and wants provisions to keep

lower-income Americans above the poverty line during retirement.

"We must guarantee that there is no change" in current or promised benefits for anyone age 55 and older, he said in a move to neutralize opposition from older Americans.

In a 53-minute speech, Bush also blended the conservative with the compassionate, and gave no ground on his policy on

For full text of speech, go to www.stripes.com

the war in Iraq in which more than 1,400 American forces have died.

He renewed his call for a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, and announced an increase in the use of DNA evidence to prevent wrongful convictions. "Soon I will send Congress a proposal to fund special training for defense counsel in capital cases," he added.

In an echo of his inaugural address pledge to promote freedom overseas, he called on the government of Iran to "end its support for terror. And to the Iranian people, I say tonight: As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you."

The longest applause was when Bush recognized Janet and Bill Norwood, the parents of Marine Sgt. Byron Norwood of Ft. Huachuca, Texas, who was killed in the assault on Fallujah. In an emotional and symbolic moment, Mrs. Norwood and Safia Taleb al-Suhail, leader of the Iraqi Women's Political Council, held each other in a long embrace. The Iraqi woman had evoked her own protracted applause earlier when she stood and saluted Congress with an ink-stained finger and V-for-victory sign after the president had introduced her as a symbol of millions of Iraqis who voted in a free election for the first time last Sunday.

Message for our men and women in uniform...

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Details on Bush trip forthcoming

BY WARD SANDERSON

Stars and Stripes

DARMSTADT, Germany — During Valentine's Day week, the White House is expected to announce the agenda for President Bush's upcoming visit to Germany.

Until now, the United States hasn't announced details of his trip to Germany on Feb. 23, which newspapers here have claimed could include stops to visit troops in Wiesbaden or at Ramstein Air Base.

A spokesperson at the National Security Council in Washington,

D.C., said the new national security adviser, Stephen J. Hadley, would announce further details during the week of Feb. 14.

Germany has announced that the visit will include a meeting in Mainz. In a prepared statement, the German government listed as topics the fight against international terrorism, the plight of Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the Asian tsunami disaster.

Army Maj. Mike Indovina, spokesman for the 1st Armored Division in Wiesbaden, said soldiers would be excited to see the president, but the only news he had were media reports.

The situation was much the same at the headquarters of U.S. Air Forces in Europe at Ramstein. Capt. Chris Watt, a spokesman there, said he had only read news reports that the air base was listed as an alternate site where Bush might address troops.

The White House first announced the trip Dec. 21. The release said Bush would meet with German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder after meeting with leaders of NATO and the European Union. He would later travel to the Slovak Republic and also meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Announcing trip details during the week of Valentine's Day may be fitting given the popular perception that the administration is attempting to mend fences with Europe over Iraq and troop reductions in Germany.

According to a transcript, White House spokesman Scott McClellan said the meetings would "underscore the president's commitment to building on our shared values of freedom, democracy and human rights, and to work closely with European allies and friends on the 21st century challenge that we face together."

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Bush shares vision, but will people invest in it?

BY RON FOURNIER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush is drawing a long gray line through the baby boom generation, hoping to keep the oldest at bay and the young at his side as he pursues drastic changes to Social Security.

Bush said in a State of the Union address, "I have the mes-

every American who is 55 years or older: Do not let anyone mislead you. For you, the Social Security system will not change."

But it will change dramatically for people under 55, if the president gets his way: Benefit cuts, increasing the retirement age and discouraging the early collection of retirement checks are all on the table.

While urging Congress to create private investment accounts for Social Security taxes, he told the under-55 set, "Your money will grow over time, at a greater rate than anything the current system can deliver."

Bush can't guarantee market-based private accounts will always yield better rates than the current program, but that might not matter to young and middle-aged Americans who have long assumed Social Security would spatter before they grew old.

People under 55 are generally more savvy about investments than their parents and grandparents who were raised during the Depression and consider Social Security a birthright. A recent Democratic poll found that nearly two-thirds of people under 50 believe that Social Security will pay lower or no benefits when they retire.

People over 50 have much less confidence in the system. Independent pollsters with the Pew Research Center found that 58 percent of people 18-54 support private investment accounts. Among those 55 and older, only 45 percent do.

Bush sought to keep the young and middle-aged on his side by appealing to their parental and material instincts. "You'll be able to pass along the money that accumulates in your personal savings accounts, to your children and grandchildren," he said.

There are troubling signs for Bush's plan: a big reduction in that sentiment swings against personal accounts when near-retirees are exposed to a series of common arguments for against Bush's plan.

Young voters and near-retirees may be less receptive when they learn the details of Bush's plan, a big reduction in benefits for young workers when they retire, larger still if they choose to establish a personal account.

Emotions run high for some at address



Janet and William Norwood, of Pflugerville, Texas, hug Wednesday after being mentioned by President Bush during his State of the Union address. Applauding, from left, Marine Staff Sgt. John Manuel Martinez; Safia Taleb al-Suhail, leader of the Iraqi Women's Political Council; and first lady Laura Bush. The Norwoods' son, Marine Sgt. Byron Norwood, was killed in Fallujah on Nov. 13.

Marine's parents, Iraqi woman share pain

BY MARY DALRYMPLE

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — They met just before the speech began: the mother of a Marine killed in Iraq and the daughter of a man killed by Saddam Hussein's regime. They found some comfort in a spontaneous moment that electrified President Bush's State of the Union address.

The two women, both touched by death in Iraq, reached out for each other while lawmakers, military leaders, the president and the nation watched. Their locked embrace inspired the longest applause of the evening.

On Thursday, the parents of Marine Corps Sgt. Byron Norwood said the Iraqi woman, Safia Taleb al-Suhail, had turned and introduced herself just before the speech.

"She thanked us for our son's sacrifice and made sure we knew the people in Iraq were grateful for the sacrifices that were made not just by our son, but by all of them," Janet Norwood said.

"I just told her how happy we were that the elections were successful and told her our son would have been pleased," said Norwood, appearing on ABC's "Good Morning America" with her husband, Bill.

Al-Suhail's father was killed 11 years ago by the Iraqi intelligence service. Now the leader of the Iraqi Women's Political Council, she watched the annual presidential address Wednesday night at the Capitol as a guest of first lady Laura Bush.

Behind her sat Janet Norwood, who sent her son into battle wishing she could "protect him like I had since he was born." Her son was proud to fight, loved his job and wanted to protect the nation, the mother wrote in a letter to the president.

"We have said farewell to some very good men and women who died for our freedom and whose memory this nation will honor forever," Bush said.

The Iraqi woman had been applauded earlier when she stood and waved a purple-ink-stained finger and V-for-victory sign after being introduced by the president as a symbol for millions of Iraqis who voted in a free election for the first time last Sunday.

Lawmakers honored those elections with a show of purple, the color that marked the index fingers of Iraqis who voted.

A wave of purple fingers went up at each mention of the Iraqi vote, a gesture organized by Rep. Bobby Jindal, R-La., to demonstrate solidarity with Iraqi voters.

Speech full of numbers, but not the negative ones

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush left some of the balance out of the balance sheet when he talked about retirement savings in his State of the Union speech.

The president told young workers they can expect higher retirement returns if they divert some of their payroll taxes into private accounts under his proposal. He didn't tell them they can expect a lower Social Security check too.

A variety of telling details went unspoken in the policy-check address, on jobs, Iraq, terrorism and more.

In a portion of his speech dealing with economic progress in the past four years, Bush trumpeted the addition of 2.3 million jobs "in the last year alone," as though he's delivered a succession of job gains.

His number was correct for the year in question, but he left out that there was an overall job loss in those four years. He remains about 300,000 jobs short of closing that jobs deficit.

Bush called Iraq "free and sovereign," an arguably premature definition in light of the continuing violence from insurgents and the overwhelming presence of U.S. troops.

The president touted global support for the Iraq war, saying 28 countries have troops on the ground. However, most troops come from the U.S. and Britain, 90 percent of coalition troop deaths have been American, and several nations have indicated they want to pull out because of costs, casualties and Sunday's vote.

Bush explained in detail how, under his proposal, young workers would be able to divert some of their Social Security payroll

taxes into private accounts "so you can build a nest egg for your own future."

Nowhere did he give the other side of the equation — that Social Security benefits for these workers would be reduced as a result. He stated "your account will provide money for retirement over and above the check you will receive from Social Security," without explaining that that check would be smaller.

Declaring Social Security will go broke if nothing is done, Bush said that by 2042, "the entire system would be exhausted and bankrupt."

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office forecasts Social Security as it is would be able to pay 75 percent of benefits in 2042 and stay solvent for 10 years beyond that.

"The speech does what one would expect it to do: focuses on advantages of the plan, not on the risks," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center.

Analysis

Terror-funding jury hears surveillance tape

Yemeni sheik met with FBI posing as militants in German hotel

BY MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A Yemeni sheik was recorded tutoring his personal assistant about code words for weapons and ammunition on secret surveillance tapes that became the centerpiece of a high-profile terror funding trial.

Sheik Mohammed Ali Hasan al-Moayad told his assistant, Mohammed Mohsen Yahya Zayed, that if Zayed wanted to buy ammunition he could say, "By God Sheik Mohammed, we wish to buy corn. The corn is running low. Should we buy it or what?"

For weapons, al-Moayad told Zayed he could use the word "peels," a type of tool used in their charity bakery in Yemen, according to a government translation of the Arabic conversation played for jurors Wednesday in federal court in Brooklyn.

"For example if they want, uh, weapons, 'By God Sheik Mohammed, the workers at

the bakery want ... they're waiting for ... what you call it? Peels. They want peels for the dough,'" al-Moayad said.

The two men were recorded after they met in a German hotel with two FBI informants posing as militant Islamists seeking help in donating \$2.5 million to Hamas and al-Qaida. The four men discussed splitting the money between the terrorist groups and al-Moayad's charities in Yemen.

Prosecutors describe al-Moayad as a longtime supporter of Osama bin Laden and Palestinian militant groups. Defense lawyers argue that al-Moayad and Zayed were dazzled by the promise of funding for their charities and said what they believed the informants wanted to hear about funneling funds to terrorists.

Beyond the corn and peels discussion, the surveillance recordings detailed what appeared to be elaborate plans to conceal the movement of the informants' funds into Yemen.

Al-Moayad also told the informants about his role as president of the Yemeni chapter of the Al-Aqsa Charitable Organization, which the government contends is a front for Palestinian terrorists. And he described his friendship with the assistant of a radical cleric from Qatar who terrorism experts have said conducted attacks on Americans and Jews.

Al-Moayad's words may counter the defense argument that he had no involvement with terrorism before he was entrapped by the government informants.

The sheik also describes a relationship with bin Laden that endured beyond the Saudi militant's battles with Russian troops in Afghanistan. Jurors on Tuesday heard a tape in which al-Moayad portrayed his relationship with bin Laden as limited to the 1980s.

"The Afghani jihad was over," al-Moayad said on a tape played Wednesday. "We take money from our leaders and deliver it to them."



Yemeni Sheik Mohammed Ali Hasan al-Moayad boasts of his ties to Osama bin Laden and Palestinian militant leaders on surveillance tapes played Tuesday in federal court in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Tobacco lawsuit

INDEPENDENCE, Mo. — A jury has awarded the family of a woman who smoked for nearly 50 years more than \$20 million in a wrongful death lawsuit against the maker of Kool cigarettes.

The Jackson County, Mo., jury awarded the family of Barbara Smith the punitive damages Wednesday.

Cancer study

NEW YORK — A one-time treatment that uses a homing-device drug to zap cancer cells with radiation made a deadly lymphoma disappear in three out of four patients, in a nearly eight years, researchers report.

While the results were described as promising, it's not known yet whether the novel approach will be superior to the standard early treatments used for a slow-growing but incurable type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Hasty Pudding honor

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Hollywood stars Catherine Zeta-Jones and Tim Robbins will be this year's recipients of the annual Hasty Pudding awards.

The awards, announced Wednesday, are given to performers who have made a "lasting and impressive contribution to the world of entertainment," by Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatre, the oldest undergraduate drama troupe in the United States.

Viagra coverage

WASHINGTON — Sexual performance drugs such as Viagra will be covered in Medicare's new prescription drug program.

The new prescription coverage begins next Jan. 1 and is expected to cost more than \$500 billion over the next decade.

From wire reports



Workers in the Credit Suisse First Boston booth on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange watch TV monitors Wednesday as the decision of the Federal Reserve Board interest rates is announced. The Federal Reserve raised interest rates for the sixth time since last June.

Fed nudges up interest rates

BY MARTIN CRUTSINGER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It's six down and seven to go. Or maybe only three more interest-rate increases, depending on which forecaster you talk to.

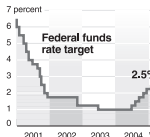
While there was a great deal of unanimity among economists concerning the Fed's first six increases, there is a split over how much higher Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and his colleagues will drive rates in their quest to find neutral. That is the point where interest rates are neither stimulating the economy nor slowing it down.

The Fed on Wednesday raised the target for the federal funds rate by one-quarter of a percentage point, to 2.5 percent. It was the sixth such increase since last summer. The rate is the interest that banks charge each other and is the Fed's main lever for influencing economic activity.

Banks' prime lending rate,

Inching up

The Fed raised the target for the federal funds rate by one-quarter percentage point on Wednesday.



Source: The Federal Reserve Board

AP

which moves in lockstep with the federal funds rate, rose another quarter point with Wednesday's Fed rate increase, to 3.5 percent. While the prime rate, used for many short-term consumer and business loans, is up from a

46-year low of 4 percent, it still is at an attractive level for borrowers.

The federal funds rate is more than double the 1 percent funds rate in effect before the Fed started tightening rates last June, but 2.5 percent is still low by historical standards.

Given the low level at which the Fed started raising interest rates, the increases haven't begun to pinch borrowers very much.

Some economists believe that three more rate hikes by the Fed, pushing the federal funds rate to 3.25 percent, will accomplish the goal of the rate rather than stimulating the economy nor slowing it down. But other analysts are forecasting that the Fed will keep up its credit tightening for the entire year, until the funds rate hits 4.25 percent in December.

Economists said there was nothing in a brief statement released after the Fed's two-day meeting to suggest that policy-makers will either speed up or slow down their rate-raising campaign.

Lawsuit-limits bill pushes forward

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A Republican drive to curb big class-action lawsuits, a top priority of President Bush and the business community, appears unstoppable unless backers themselves fiddle too much with a carefully wrought compromise.

With enough Senate Democrats agreeing to a GOP-approved compromise to overcome filibuster threats and with enough House Republicans ready to back a White House-approved bill, the legislation seems to be on a fast track.

Sensors who support the bill say greedy lawyers make more money from class-action lawsuits than the actual victims and that attorneys sometimes threaten companies with lawsuits just to extort quick financial settlements.

The Senate Judiciary Committee was starting to consider the legislation Thursday.

Opponents of the bill, which would shut the majority of class-action suits to federal instead of state courts, said it was aimed at forcing businesses to escape multimillion-dollar judgments for their wrongdoing and hurting the lawyers who litigate those cases.

Federal courts are assumed to be less likely to issue multimillion-dollar verdicts against big corporations.

Under the Senate proposal, if fewer than one-third of the plaintiffs are from the same state as the primary defendant, the case would go to federal court.

The House legislation is retroactive, which means it would knock into federal court every pending case that meets the criteria.

OPINION

U.S. help, Iraqis voted for their future

BY JOHN HALL
Media General

A year ago, just before President Bush delivered his State of the Union message, the U.S. death toll from the war in Iraq crept past 500. Now it has surged over the 1,400 mark.

Yet there has been an election and the Iraqis, for now, are brimming with euphoria as they set about the business of forming a new constitution and trying to lure the sullen Sunni Muslim minority into a secular government.

The election took place under protection of a U.S. security force that has grown 20 percent in a year to 150,000. Without that huge, well-armed force, backed by British and other international troops, the Iraqis probably would not have been able to vote.

A year ago, many Americans still thought of Iraq as a mop-up operation with the hardest fighting behind us. A few roadside bombs were going off here and there, but it had become a largely invisible war here. American troops had captured the big prize — Saddam Hussein himself — covering in a spider hole south of Tikrit only a month before Bush announced the invasion.

Many were forecasting that the worst and cruellest part of the insurgency was ahead.

The Iraqi force being trained to take some of the load off the Americans and the "coalition of the willing" proved insufficient to police the major cities of Iraq during the election season. At least they could not be trained in time to do the job themselves or the insurgents intimidated them and their families from taking up security roles.

Condoleezza Rice, during Senate confirmation hearings on her nomination as secretary of state, acknowledged that the administration's estimate of an Iraqi military force of 120,000 wasn't realistic. She promised to return later with a better estimate. She hasn't yet.

Still, despite skepticism about the Iraqis' capability to defend and preserve their fledgling democracy, the success of the elections has created another wave of optimism. It is the same kind of heady spirit that took hold after the American "shock and awe" victory and the fall of Baghdad in the spring of 2003.

A little euphoria may be in order now. The sight of Iraqis defying death threats to go to the polls has floored skeptics who had been accustomed to seeing nothing but a fright show in Iraq.

Even Europeans, with a legitimately elected government on the verge of being installed in Iraq, are said to be looking more favorably on finally making a contribution to Iraqi reconstruction. Bush may have a less grim reception when he goes to Europe this month.

Indeed, it was a rare day for freedom. Iraqi democrats will be long remembered for their purple-fingered pluck against terrorists who had dragged their neighbors into the streets and executed them in full view of the world just for being election workers or security workers. Their fingers stained with ink used to prevent multiple voting and fraud, they used them as symbols of defiance against the oppressor.

The purples now follow a distinguished line of campaign: Poland's Solidarity movement, Czech and German students who revolted against their communist governments, the Baltic people who literally



formed a human chain of 2 million from Vilnius to Tallinn to demonstrate their determination to break out of the Soviet Union; the yellow-power Manila revolutionaries who overthrew Ferdinand Marcos and the orange-jacket victory of Viktor Yushchenko's pro-Western Ukrainians.

The one difference is that, for the brave Iraqis, they were 150,000 Americans nearby; for the others, they were on their own, more or less.

The American troops and their allies went to Iraq as part of the war on terrorism and

stayed to make the Iraqi election possible. The war has been less and less about the war on terrorism and more and more about the liberation and democratization of Iraq. It has become a war about winning freedom for the families of another nation.

Yet, more than 1,400 Americans have died in Iraq, more than 900 in the last year.

There are not adequate words to say they are the real heroes of the Iraq election.

John Hall is the senior Washington correspondent of Media General News Service.

When robots kill in war, humanity gets no peace

BY DAVID L. ULIN

Last week, in a parking lot in New Jersey, the U.S. Army unveiled what may be the future of war: 3-foot-tall robot "soldiers," outfitted with tank tracks, night vision and mounted automatic weapons capable of firing more than 300 rounds at a burst.

Known as SWORDS (Special Weapons Observation Reconnaissance Detection Systems), these battle bots are on the leading edge of a new kind of warfare, in which — or so the argument goes — our troops will one day remain hidden (and, presumably, protected) while engaging the enemy by remote control. The Army intends to deploy 18 SWORDS units to Iraq in the spring, marking the first time robots have been used to fight and kill human beings one on one.

If, like me, you grew up on science fiction, the idea of robot soldiers strikes a chilling chord. Killer droids, after all, have long been speculative-universe staples, potent symbols of the dangers of technology, of what happens when machines go wrong. In Karel Čapek's 1920 play "R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)" — which introduced "robot" to the vernacular — automatons rise up to wipe out the human race. In "Blade Runner," renegade cyborgs stage a bloody mutiny and lead to E.T. Robo armies rampage by the screenful in George Lucas' "Star Wars" films.

And then, of course, there is the "Terminator" series, in which robots designed to look and smell like people infiltrate human encampments to execute rebel leaders without mercy or remorse. This is the cybernetic future at its most apocalyptic: a world in which our high-tech weapons turn on us, just as we always feared they would.

The fear resonates. Why else would SWORDS designers feel compelled to reas-

sure us, as they did last week, that their robots are not autonomous terminators, but function only at the command of humans, who must identify targets via video before giving the electronic OK to shoot? On a certain level, the developers of SWORDS make a valid argument: These are not smart weapons, but surrogates for soldiers in the field.

It's hard to quarrel with any tool that might make our soldiers safer and, if nothing else, a robot warrior will never have to worry about inadequate armor or supplies.

Yet something more disturbing is at work. A sense of willful dissociation, as if, with enough distance, we might remove ourselves from what war is. Here too the military mimics Hollywood. For "Star Wars," it's been reported, storytellers relied on battle bots to take the blood out of the on-screen killing and render moral questions moot.

A similar logic fuels the ban on photos of flag-draped coffins — if we don't see them, they're not there — and it's no stretch to suggest that SWORDS, and other high-tech weapons now being developed by the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, will further sanitize our point of view.

What can't be sanitized, however, is the robot's deadly efficiency: remove the human from the weapon, and problems like recoil and breath control are eliminated, allowing the robot to hit a nickel-sized target at 328 yards. In one test, a SWORDS scored 70 out of 70 bull's-eyes.

Thirty or so years ago, the composer John Cage proposed a different sort of battle strategy: Take the heads of warning nations, give each a 50-pound sack of horse manure, lock them in a room, and let them fight it out. It's a quixotic notion, but at least it takes into ac-

count a human element, the idea that war cannot be waged without a price.

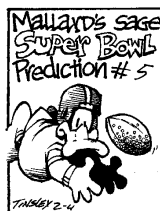
As for the SWORDS units, what does it say about us that this is how we use our creativity — to invent robots that offer more efficient ways to kill? How can we be so disconnected that we refer to people as "targets," whether they are enemies or civilians, too indistinct to identify through the garble of a video display? Surely we lose something by all this disengagement.

It's easy to be ruthless from a distance; less so when you see the whites of someone's eyes. If there's no potential for human cost, how do we calculate our humanity, how do we show anything resembling restraint? And without restraint, are we even fully human anymore?

David L. Ulin is the author of "The Myth of Solid Ground: Earthquakes, Prediction, and the Fault Line Between Reason and Faith." This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



In 2007, all revenue from Super Bowl 41 will be donated to countries that hate us, in hopes that they'll like us.



...They will, of course, continue to hate us.

IN THE WORLD

Lincoln leaves Indonesian waters

WHO: Precautions stopped major outbreaks

BY CHRISTOPHER BODEEN

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — The departure of the USS Abraham Lincoln from Indonesian waters later Thursday marks a major drawdown of the U.S. military aid effort that began six days after the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami and was the biggest U.S. military operation in Southeast Asia since the Vietnam War.

Also Thursday, the U.S. aircraft carrier that led a massive helicopter operation to deliver life-giving aid to cut-off villages in the early days of the emergency began steaming away from the disaster zone.

Helicopters from the ship have flown hundreds of missions delivering food, water and other aid to remote villages along the devastated western coast of Sumatra island, U.S. officials said last month the emergency phase of the relief effort was ending and that the military would gradually withdraw.

About 5,000 U.S. troops will remain in Indonesia after the Lincoln's departure.

Meanwhile, health officials said precautions at the outset of the tsunami disaster in Indonesia prevented major outbreaks of infectious diseases as details emerged in India of nine survivors who spent 38 days in the jungle before they were rescued.

The top World Health Organization health crisis official said efforts to combat disease outbreaks in Sumatra had exceeded his expectations, after the U.N. body had warned of possible mosquito- and waterborne epidemics in the region, which is in the grip of the rainy season.

Although some cases had been reported, "we have managed to prevent any major disease outbreak from affecting the tsunami-affected populations," David Nabarro told reporters.

"When this started — the relief effort — I did not believe that we would succeed in avoiding outbreaks," he said. But he warned that, "We must remain vigilant."

The death toll from the disaster continued to rise. Indonesian workers cleaning up debris of the Dec. 26 tsunami found 897 more bodies, raising the confirmed death toll in that country to 111,171, the government said Thursday.

The number of missing remains 127,749, said the government's National Disaster Relief Coordinating Board. Most of the missing are feared dead but can't be legally declared such for one year.

The overall death toll ranges from 158,868 to 178,115. The number of missing ranges from 26,404 to 142,107 — with most presumed dead.



Navy servicemen gather prior to a farewell ceremony on board the USS Abraham Lincoln off Banda Aceh, Indonesia, on Thursday.

Vatican: Pope is improving

The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II's condition is improving and he has not suffered any more breathing spasms, the Vatican said, but the 84-year-old pontiff may have to spend up to a week in the hospital to fully recover.

In a sign that the pope's health had stabilized, papal spokesman Joaquín Navarro-Valls said the Vatican would not issue another medical bulletin until Friday. The Holy See has said the pope would spend a few more days at the Gemelli Polyclinic hospital.

"The Holy Father's general and respiratory conditions show a positive evolution. The pope has rested well" with no repeat of the breathing spasms that sent him to the hospital Tuesday, Navarro-Valls said.

John Paul was running a slight fever, he said.

Navarro-Valls did not say exactly how long the pope would remain hospitalized, but he told reporters: "In my personal experience, when I've had the flu, it lasts seven days or a week — take your pick."

Rice makes first visit to Europe

Secretary of State hopes to mend relations hurt by Iraq

BY ANNE GEARAN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For her symbolic first trip abroad as the new face of U.S. foreign policy, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is paying special attention to European allies who stuck with the United States through war and its aftermath in Iraq.

Britain, the staunchest ally on Iraq, is the first stop. Rice is to meet with Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw on Friday. Later in the trip, Rice will call on Italy and Poland, both countries that sent significant numbers of troops to Iraq despite internal opposition to the war.

She is also offering an olive branch to France — a critic of the Iraq invasion whose people remain suspicious of President Bush's intentions across the globe — by choosing Paris as the site of her first major speech on U.S. goals in Europe and beyond.

Rice will skip Spain, which angered the United States by pulling its troops out of Iraq last April, weeks after terrorists bombed Madrid commuter trains on March 11, killing 191 and wounding more than 1,500.

Iraq and the strained relations of the recent past hang over the weeklong trip to Europe

and the Middle East, but Rice will focus on brighter prospects for Bush's second term. Topping the list is the possibility of renewed peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Rice will visit Jerusalem and the West Bank between stops in eight European capitals and the Vatican.

Europeans are expected to watch Rice's tour closely for any sign of the Bush administration's next move in Iraq, as well as its plans for answering nuclear threats in Iran and North Korea. Rice herself will also be the object of curiosity.

"The United States will press Rice to send at least 'subtle signals' to Iran that the United States backs the Europeans' effort to head off nuclear weapons development, said John Bruton, head of the European Commission delegation in Washington.

"The United States is not as engaged as we hoped it might be," he said, even though "we want the same outcome."



Rice

Arrests keep would-be French militants from battle in Iraq

BY PIERRE-ANTOINE SOUCHARD

The Associated Press

PARIS — Thamer Bouchnak and Cherif Kouachi, two recently arrested 22-year-old French Muslims, won't be going to Iraq to fight American troops or to die as martyrs. Their lawyers say their fast track to the rebel insurgency dried up days before they were to leave.

The two were arrested last week by counter-intelligence agents who dismantled their alleged Iraq connection. The network had already funneled at least seven people to

Iraq — including three French men who died there, investigators have said.

Bouchnak was arrested Jan. 24 at Paris' Orly airport on his return from a pilgrimage to Mecca. Kouachi was arrested in a roundup of 10 other people over two days last week. The arrests were part of an investigation of networks funneling complaints from France to Iraq. Eight people were freed.

Bouchnak and Kouachi, both of North African origin, were to leave for Syria last week, their lawyers said Thursday. The two were to be met by a 14-year-old, buy Kalashnikov ri-

flés then head for Iraq, according to the lawyers, Dominique Many and Vincent Olivier.

Instead, the young men were placed under investigation for "criminal association in connection with a terrorist enterprise," along with a third man, Farid Benyettou, a 33-year-old who judicial officials claim acted as the recruiter.

Bouchnak and Kouachi resemble war-ready Islamic extremists much less than they do their peers, the lawyers said.

"This is the story of a band of kids. Two or three at each tough, each one better and you can't turn back," Olivier said.

Afghanistan mines

HERAT, Afghanistan — Demolition experts blew up nearly 20,000 anti-personnel mines in western Afghanistan Thursday in a growing effort to rid the country of weapons left over from two decades of fighting, officials said.

A total of 19,179 mines collected from militia units in and around the city of Herat were detonated in a huge explosion near the city on Thursday morning, the largest effort of its kind since the fall of the Taliban three years ago.

Georgia PM dies

TBILISI, Georgia — Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania, who helped lead Georgia's revolution that toppled the corruption-tainted regime of Eduard Shevardnadze, died early Thursday in a friend's apartment from what officials called a heart ailment and a leak from a heater.

Georgia's interior minister said there was no reason to suspect foul play, but a lawmaker reportedly pointed the finger at "outside forces." His remark appeared to be aimed at Russia, which has ties with Georgia's separatist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and prompted a terse response from Moscow.

Rally for the poor

LONDON — Nelson Mandela on Thursday compared widespread poverty in developing countries to man-made evils such as slavery and apartheid, and urged wealthy nations to do more to fight it.

At a rally in central London's Trafalgar Square, the former South African president and Nobel Peace Prize winner said developed nations must provide more aid to poor countries and lift their crippling debts.

"In this new century, millions of people in the world's poorest countries remain imprisoned, enslaved and in chains. They are trapped in the prison of poverty. It is time to set them free," Mandela said.

Pakistani rail bombing

QUETTA, Pakistan — Assaults detonated two homemade bombs on rail tracks and blew up a high-voltage power line in the Pakistani city of Quetta on Thursday, but no one was hurt, railway and police officials said.

The first bomb exploded a few yards from a rail track in Mastung, about 30 miles south of Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province, said Tajamal Shah, an area police officer.

He said the blast caused no damage to the track.

A second bomb damaged a railroad line near Dera Ghazi Khan, about 55 miles west of Multan in the eastern Punjab province, police officer Sulman Chaudhry said. No one was injured.

From The Associated Press

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Boys admit plan

CA SACRAMENTO — Two 16-year-old boys admitted they planned a racially motivated Columbine-style massacre of their fellow high school students in a plea deal that sends them to the county Boys Ranch for no longer than a year.

The deal, which was opposed by the prosecutor and the mother of one of the black students targeted, means the teens could be free in as little as four months.

"What message is this sending to other kids?" said the mother of one of the students targeted. "I am happy my child is alive, but there needs to be more accountability."

Equipped with hand-drawn maps of the Laguna Creek High School cafeteria, the two then-15-year-olds planned to set off bombs and then gun down students as they ran from the explosions, court records show.

The boys were arrested in early February last year after one of their friends went to police. The boys had not acted on their plans, but they had attempted to burglarize a sporting goods store that had firearms.

Supplying volunteers

MI EAST LANSING — Michigan State University is ninth-highest in the country this year of schools supplying volunteers to the Peace Corps, with 74 alumni serving as overseas volunteers, the Peace Corps says. Since 1961, Michigan State has produced about 2,000 volunteers.

Deputy AG robbed

FL TAMPA — A deputy to state Attorney General Charlie Crist was beaten and robbed after calling two escorts to his Tampa hotel room, police said.

Authorities said Deputy Attorney General John Rimes, 54, was in town on business and was staying at the Hilton. "Mr. Rimes had called an escort service around 10:30 at night," said police spokeswoman Laura McElroy.

She said two women came to his hotel room. "A short time later, there was a knock at the door," McElroy said. "He looked through the peephole and saw a well-dressed man."

She said Rimes, who works out of the attorney general's Tallahassee office, opened the door and immediately was pepper-sprayed and punched in the head several times. She said the man and the two escorts then stole about \$500 from Rimes and fled.

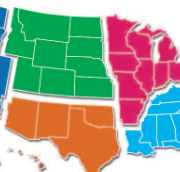
New high school opens

PA WARRINGTON — Classes opened for students at the new Central Bucks High School South. Nearly 1,600 students had been crammed in two other Bucks County high schools while the new building was going up. It cost about \$83 million.

Men trading spaces

KS TAMPA — All Jim Clemmer and Jim Allen have in common is that they both call Tampa home.

Clemmer lives in Tampa, Kan., while Allen lives in a suburb of Tampa, Fla. Next month, the two



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

men will trade places and discover the "other" Tampa. The visits were arranged as part of a contest sponsored by a Tampa, Fla., radio station.

Neither man really knows what to expect on his visit.

"I don't know what we'll be doing," Clemmer said of the trip he and his wife, Mary, will make to Florida. "All I know is it ain't gonna cost anything."

For his part, Allen said the idea of spending a weekend in a "small, rural Kansas town" was "intriguing."

Allen, of Brandon, Fla., won the radio contest by picking the winning slogan for Tampa, Fla. — "Paradise Under Construction."

Clemmer was chosen to go to Florida because he is mayor of Tampa, Kan.

Jack Harris, co-host of the station that sponsored the contest, said his stations received several entries because some Floridians want to see what life in small-town Kansas is like.

A smarter school

MA NEWBURY — The 18th century boarding school in this town — Governor Dummer Academy — wants to change its name to prevent any smart guys from making jokes about it.

Headmaster John Doggett said the "Dummer" name can make a poor first impression on prospective students and their parents, even though it's simply the sur-

name of Massachusetts Gov. William Dummer, who donated land to start the school.

"Rightly or wrongly, first impressions make a difference," headmaster John Doggett said. "Certainly, when you go outside of the Boston region, the first impression sometimes doesn't convey what the school is all about."

Some alumni think it's a dumb idea.

"It's a horrible move," said Thomas Driscoll of Swampscott, a 1978 graduate and football co-captain who is now the Essex County Clerk of Courts. "Governor Dummer has such tradition. That's what troubles me about this. The name is very special."

The school decided to change the name in December after about 2½ years of discussion. The Board of Trustees, which includes parents and alumni, will vote on a new name in May.

Jury awards man \$15.6M

CA GLENDALE — A jury has awarded \$15.6 million to a man whose image was used for years without his permission on Taster's Choice coffee labels.

Russell Christoff, a former model from Northern California, posed for a two-hour Nestle photo shoot in 1986 but figured it was a bust — until he stumbled across his likeness on a coffee jar while shopping at a drug store in 2002.

A legal dispute with Nestle USA ensued, during which Christoff, 38, declined the company's \$100,000 settlement offer, and Nestle USA turned down his offer to settle for \$8.5 million.

Last week, a Los Angeles County Superior Court jury ordered Nestle USA to pay Christoff \$15.6 million for using his likeness without his permission and profiting from it. The award includes 5 percent of the Glendale-based company's profit from Taster's Choice sales from 1997 to 2003.

During that time, Nestle sold the freeze-dried coffee with labels featuring Christoff's face in the United States, Mexico, South Korea, Japan, Israel and Kuwait. The company's Canadian arm started using his image in 1986.

Static over noise plan

NY NEW YORK — At a hearing on a proposal to quiet down the Big Apple, Mister Softie had a frosty response.

James Conway Jr., whose father started what is now one of the world's largest mobile purveyors of soft-serve ice cream, said such a plan would silence his trucks' familiar jingle and freeze profits.

"The way you knew Mister Softie was in the neighborhood was the song. So without the jingle, our sales will plummet," Conway said at a City Council hearing.

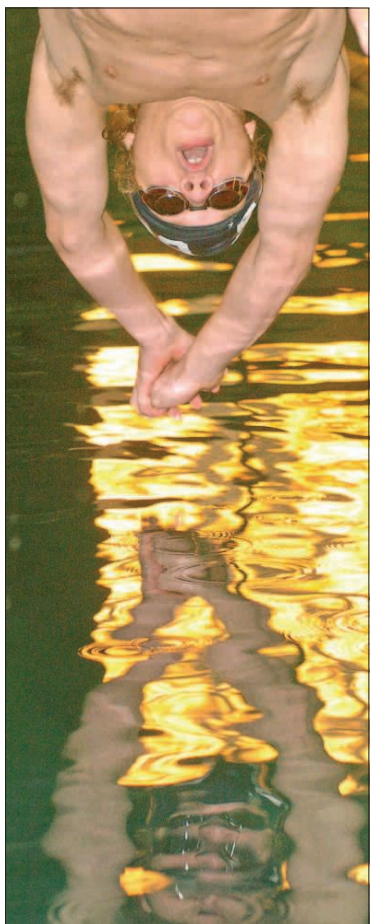
Mayor Michael Bloomberg is trying to revise the Noise Code in response to what has long been the No. 1 complaint of New York residents: The city's too loud.

At the hearing, the proposed revisions ran into a virtual wall of sound: Nightclub owners were displeased about the prospect of having to turn down their music, restaurateurs were worried that their air conditioners would be too loud, and construction workers said they should be able to continue to pile drive and jackhammer at will.



Golfing on the coast

Golfers at Pacific Grove Municipal Golf Course in Pacific Grove, Calif., tee off as huge waves crash along the rocks Tuesday.



Off to a great start

Central Columbia's Joey Scheno dives off the block at the start of the boy's 200 IM race during a home meet against Danville on Tuesday in Lime Ridge, Pa. Scheno would finish the race in first place with a time of 2:07.56.



City reflected

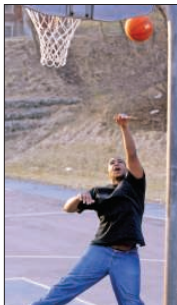
The Empire State Building is reflected between pieces of ice on the Hudson River on the West side of Manhattan on Tuesday in New York. Several weeks of extremely cold temperatures are finally moderating this week.



Chute! It's just fun! A Scottville Elementary School student waits for a ball to drop through the opening in the top of a parachute being floated over his head by a group of classmates and parents during an activity night exercise Tuesday night at West Shore Community College near Ludington, Mich.



Carousel being restored An unidentified man prepares to move two antique carousel horses after a news conference Tuesday at the Little Rock, Ark., Zoo. Pat Chapman of Boca Raton, Fla., an owner of 2004 Kentucky Derby winner Smarty Jones, donated \$10,000 to rehabilitate a carousel horse that will carry Smarty Jones' name when the 80-year-old carousel is restored.



Hoping for a hoop J.R. Mason, 18, takes advantage of the nice weather to shoot some hoops late Tuesday in Burlington, Iowa.



Turtle tales to take home Derby, Kan., sixth-graders, from left, Andrew Freeman, Alex Bush and Matthew Kelzenberg get up close and personal with a western Kansas painted turtle. It was part of the JASON Project's study of the Louisiana wetlands at Wichita State University's Hughes Metropolitan Complex in Wichita, Kan. The JASON Project is a multi-media science and technology program for students nationwide, founded by oceanographer Robert Ballard and named by the Greek mythology character who sailed the seas with his Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece.

No release for woman

CA SAN RAFAEL — Friederike Kruse claimed to be driven by a supernatural force when she butchered a woman in 1990, screaming, "I am the devil," as police arrested her.

But the former follower of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, who has spent the last 14 years at Napa State Hospital, sat stoically in a courtroom as a prosecutor and defense lawyer sparred over whether she is still a danger to the community.

Judge John Stephen Graham of Marin County Superior Court praised Kruse, 55, for her pleasant demeanor and cooperative testimony, but denied her petition to enroll in a San Francisco outpatient program.

In doing so, he rejected the recommendations of the state Department of Mental Health.

The judge, who has held hearings into Kruse's mental state since September, said it would not be prudent to transfer her from the state mental hospital to a group home in San Francisco.

Relief aid questioned

NC ASHEVILLE — Rep. Charles Taylor wants federal officials to explain why eastern North Carolina got most of the \$20 million for Hurricane Frances relief when most of the damage was in western counties. Taylor said in a letter to FEMA that he'll go to the General Accounting Office or ask for a formal investigation if he doesn't get a satisfactory response.

Did son aid in death?

TX HOUSTON — Authorities scheduled an autopsy Monday to determine whether a man removed a pacemaker from his 85-year-old mother's chest before or after she died.

Ann Hunt Donaldson's death was reported about 12:30 p.m. Sunday.

Authorities who arrived at her home initially thought she died from natural causes, Harris County Sheriff's Lt. Danny Billingsley said.

But emergency workers noticed a cut on her chest.

Billingsley said the woman's son, James Donaldson, told detectives he removed the pacemaker after his mother died of natural causes.

"His excuse for doing it is there had been this ongoing problem, I guess you could say dispute, with the insurance companies and doctors since 1995," Billingsley said. James Donaldson, 59, was charged with tampering with evidence and remains in custody at Harris County Jail. It was unclear if he had an attorney yet.

Detectives asked him to produce the pacemaker, but he didn't turn it over.

Store must pay girl \$9M

FL ST. PETERSBURG — Dillard's department stores must pay at least \$9.4 million to a girl who lost three fingers when her hand got stuck in an escalator, a jury ruled Tuesday.

Attorneys for Kerrianna Johnson, 7, said Dillard's managers knew the escalator was dangerous and set up a sham company to make it appear to regulators that the escalators were being main-

tained.

Kerrianna, who was 5 at the time, lost her fingers as she tried to free her stuck shoe from the escalator during a shopping trip with her mother and two siblings. Jurors learned that more than 80 people had gotten shoes or clothing caught in the down escalator at the Tyne Square Mall store since 1998.

Dillard's attorneys acknowledged some fault for the escalator, but argued the accident happened because the girl's mother was not supervising her properly.

The award covers medical expenses, pain and suffering, and could go even higher after the jury considers punitive damages. The girl's family is seeking at least \$35.8 million.

Long-distance learning

IN INDIANAPOLIS — An estimated 28,000 Indiana students took college classes through the Internet, cable and DVD in the 2003-04 school year, state educators said. The state's seven public universities and three private colleges offer courses through what is known as distance learning.

Man sentenced to death

CT HARTFORD — Eduardo Santiago Jr., 25, was sentenced to death by lethal injection after being convicted of shooting a man in exchange for a broken snowmobile. Santiago apologized for being involved in the December 2000 murder of Joseph Niwinski, whom he shot in the head as he slept.

Baxley leads for '06

AL MOBILE — Lt. Gov. Lucy Baxley leads former Gov. Don Siegelman for the 2006 Democratic gubernatorial nomination, according to a Mobile Register-University of South Alabama poll of 400 likely Democratic voters. It found Baxley supported by 45 percent, Siegelman by 31 percent.

Boy charged with assault

WI MILWAUKEE — A 12-year-old boy has been charged with sexually assaulting a 4-year-old girl and a 7-year-old girl. A delinquency petition filed Monday in Milwaukee County Children's Court said a manager looked at a security monitor Saturday afternoon and noticed the alleged assault taking place.

The manager ran to the weight room and saw the boy pulling up his shorts, the petition said.

The girl said the boy hit her, pushed her down, kicked her, pulled at her pants and choked her with her scarf, according to the petition.

Most of the seven-minute encounter between the unsupervised children was videotaped by security cameras.

The boy appeared Monday before a Children's Court judge on one count of first-degree sexual assault of a child, exposing his genitals, battery and two counts of lewd and lascivious behavior.

He does not have a record and will remain in secure detention until his Feb. 10 hearing. If found delinquent, he could be sent to a juvenile institution for up to two years, and the orders could be renewed until he turns 18.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

Paris Hilton to host 'SNL'

Paris Hilton will be the host of this week's "Saturday Night Live."



Hilton

It will be her first time as host, NBC said Tuesday. She previously appeared on "SNL" in a tongue-in-cheek interview with Jimmy Fallon on the show's "Week-end Update" segment.

Hilton is the star of "The Simple Life" with friend Nicole Richie. The Fox TV reality series, now in its third season, features the duo working in a series of menial jobs.

She also has published a memoir, "Confessions of an Heiress: A Tongue-in-Cheek Peek Behind the Pose."

British band Keane will perform as the show's musical guest.

Orchestra has new chief conductor

Jiri Belohlavek will become chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and David Robertson will be principal guest conductor, the orchestra announced Tuesday.

Belohlavek, 58, will be chief conductor designate until the summer of 2006, when he assumes the chief conductor post on the first night of the annual Proms concerts. He succeeds Leonard Slatkin, who was chief conductor from 2000 until last summer.

Belohlavek was chief conductor of the Prague Symphony (1977-89), music director of the Czech Philharmonic (1990-1992) and principal guest conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra (1995-2000). He made his Metropolitan Opera debut last month in Janacek's "Kat'a Kabanova" and is to make his Berlin Philharmonic debut next year.

Robertson becomes principal guest conductor in October, two months after Jukka-Pekka Saraste's term ends.

Simmons to promote animal hot line

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has recruited hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons to promote a new toll-free hot line for New Yorkers to report abuse of animals.



Simmons

Launched on Tuesday, the campaign will use public service announcements and print ads featuring Simmons to encourage people to make anonymous tips to the hot line — 1-877-THE-ASPCA.

"There is nothing cool about being cruel to animals," Simmons said in a statement. "They have no choice or voice."

In 2004, the ASPCA investigated about 4,500 reports of animal cruelty citywide, resulting in 54 arrests.

Pros return in ESPN's 'Dream' show

NBA pros of years past will trade their jerseys for ear pieces, microphones and a layer of TV makeup when the third season of ESPN's "Dream Job" returns.

There will be a special preview episode Feb. 20, and starting the following Sunday, Dana Barros, Dee Brown, Matt Bullard, Darryl Dawkins, J.R. Reid and Gerald Wilkins will compete for a one-year NBA studio analyst contract with ESPN. The finale for the five-week series is March 27.

"These guys are ready to start a new chapter in their post-NBA careers," said Mark Shapiro, ESPN executive vice president, Sunday, and Benetton. "While their expertise on the court is without question, making the jump to the game analyst role will be a challenge that requires an entirely different skill set."

Hosted by Stuart Scott, each hourlong episode will show the contestants competing in a variety of challenges meant to test their on-air worthiness. Whether they are breaking down plays, mastering the telestrator or analyzing game footage, they'll see if they have what it takes to relate to viewers.

Guest NBA athletes and personalities will make appearances during the series to participate in mock segments and scenarios for the contestants.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



Alley has fun with weighty issue

BY ROB OWEN
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

LOS ANGELES

It takes a certain kind of actress to have the "it" is her weight.

Kirstie Alley ("Cheers," "Veronica's Closet") has a background in comedy, which probably helps, but the level of self-deprecating humor she displays playing essentially herself in Showtime's "Fat Actress" (10 p.m. EST March 7) is startling nonetheless.

"When I was doing 'Cheers,' I was hauled in several times for being too fat," Alley said at a press conference this week. "If you'll look back on 'Cheers,' I don't think I ever got over 135 pounds and I'm 5-foot-8 ... When we wrote this show, I said ... This is the most humiliating moment of my life. They might need to pad me because I'm really not that fat." But after I saw the first episode, I was like, "Oh, my God, I have the fattest [rear end] in the world!" I had no idea I was that fat. So this is cathartic for me also."

Alley, now a Jenny Craig spokeswoman and on one of

her diets, said she topped the scales at 207 pounds and is now down to 197. Her goal is to reach 140 pounds.

She said only one person warned her about hurting her career by starting in a series that, at least in part, is about her weight, but she ignored that advice.

"When you're honest about something and you find the humor in something — I mean, I couldn't have been attacked any more than I was being attacked," she said of tabloid reports about her weight gain before "Fat Actress."

"I was under size 24/7. So it has actually been very liberating to just decide, you know, there's got to be humor in this. I'm not the only person in the world who has gotten fat."

Alley said that after "Veronica's Closet," she returned to a normal life, spending more time with her children. "I turned into Donna Reed — only she didn't get fat," Alley said.

"I was cooking all the time. I started having tons of company again, and I started doing all the things that I hadn't been doing when I was doing a series that I didn't have the time to do. It just sort of crept up on me, I think."

Alley said she's not concerned about the show becoming less funny if she's successful in losing weight. "The show is really more about the state of mind of women and introversions that they experience and how easy it is to sort of prey upon women and their insecurities," she said. "It's actually more about than about just being fat. If I'm skinny in it, I'm sure I'll have some big disease on the cover of The Star. And there's a season [of the show]."

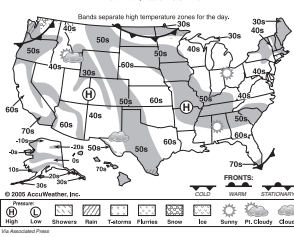
Seemingly stranger than Alley's self-effacing bravery is that the show's writer, Brenda Hampton, created The WB's "7th Heaven."

"7th Heaven" is more the fluke than this," Hampton said. "I started in comedy and I wrote half-hour comedy. ... My first love is comedy."

In the premiere episode of "Fat Actress," Alley begs a meeting with Jeff Zucker, president of NBC Universal Television Group. Zucker plays a mean, venal version of himself who's all smiles to Alley's face and talks badly about her weight as soon as she leaves the room.

Alley and Hampton liked Zucker's performance so much, they've invited him back for a second appearance.

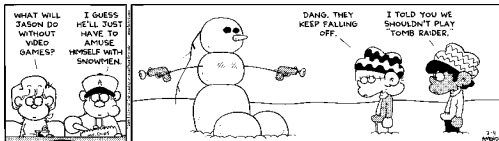
"It's very real that of course people would be social, give me a hug. 'Great to see you, blah, blah, blah,' Alley said. "But we know they're going, 'She's [bleeping] fat. What the hell is this? Why in the hell is she so fat?'"



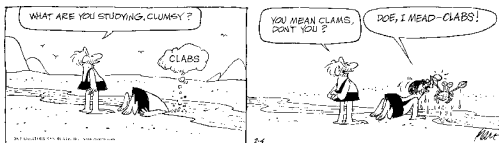
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Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



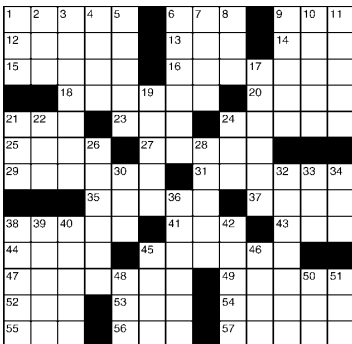
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Discontinuance
6 Spigot
9 Bleacherites' cry
12 Use
13 Spanish 9-Across?
14 Praise in verse
15 Cleopatra's carrier
16 Contradiction
18 Points of view
20 Dijon daddy
21 Tummy muscles
23 Tibetan beast
24 Fair
25 Origin
27 Promenade
29 He was Doc Ock in "Spider-Man 2"
31 Big East team
35 Barbershop need
37 \$50, in "Monopoly"38 Rot
41 Scott Joplin's style
43 Ump
44 "The Good Earth" heroine
45 Music-biz bribery
47 Ideal
49 Indulges in brooding
52 Greek vowel
53 Early bird?
54 "It — Witz there was"
55 Conael

Down

- 16 Larry's pal
17 Second attempt
18 Wander off
19 Yea undoer
20 Razed wall of a castle
21 Phony story
22 Ms. Gardner
23 Sunshade
24 Portent
25 Song of sorrow
26 Kansas River city
27 Remark re Yorick
28 Apiece
29 Calgary Stampede, e.g.
30 Decorate
31 Under a bad spell
32 Poise
33 Bolivian city
34 Branch
35 Greet the bad guy
36 Spellbound
37 Albania's capital
38 Wander off
39 Yea undoer
40 Razed wall of a castle
41 Phony story
42 Ms. Gardner
43 Sunshade
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45 Song of sorrow
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57 Albania's capital
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60 Razed wall of a castle
61 Phony story
62 Ms. Gardner
63 Sunshade
64 Portent
65 Song of sorrow
66 Kansas River city
67 Remark re Yorick
68 Apiece
69 Calgary Stampede, e.g.
70 Decorate
71 Under a bad spell
72 Poise
73 Bolivian city
74 Branch
75 Greet the bad guy

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-4

CRYPTOQUIP

L E C R Y K K P U C A N V S Z V P
Q C E V C V Q S P Z K Z A P P K Y P.
I R V X C R ' K T S C I Z I Y X

U L N N V Q P T C L A V.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN AN ASTRONOMER WORKS SOMEWHERE ELSE AT NIGHT, I TAKE IT HE'S MOONLIGHTING.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals S

Thoughtful rabbi brightens spirits

Dear Abby: After reading the letters about hospital gowns, I thought I'd share my story. I am a rabbi. When I first trained as a chaplain, I was taught to make my hospital rounds in full dress — wearing a suit and tie, with my jacket buttoned. However, one day a patient expressed that although she needed to talk to me, she felt terribly uncomfortable being there in "a hospital gown with her tuchas sticking out" while I sat there in a three-piece suit.

I stood up, told her I'd be back in a moment, went to the nurse's station and got a hospital gown. I took off my suit, donned the gown over my briefs and T-shirt, and headed straight back to the patient's room. The minute she saw me in that gown, she brightened and relaxed enough to open up about all the concerns on her mind.

The visit took a little longer than usual, and when I finished our session with a prayer for

healing, I rose from the chair. As I did, the sound as my thighs ripped themselves from the Naugahyde brought a huge smile to both our faces. I was laughing so hard I forgot to hold the back of the gown as I headed back down the hall — so I was exposed.

Fortunately, the nurses had a sense of humor. One said, "Not a bad tush for a rabbi!" I learned an important lesson on creativity that day.

But I also learned that two hospital gowns are better than one — if you remember to put one on backward.

— **Rabbi Craig H. Ezring, Boca Raton, Fla.**

Dear Rabbi Ezring: Your suit may have been off for her, but my hat is so to go for going the extra mile to make a difference in a sick woman's life. Your method may have been unorthodox, but your message of healing far surpassed any fashion statement.



Dear Abby

Lack of contact with family their loss

Dear Annie: I've been married for over 15 years and have two children, one of whom is autistic and nonverbal. We have worked so hard to make life "normal" for my children despite many strange looks, ignorant comments and lost friendships.

What I'm having a hard time with now is my in-laws. Four years ago, they totally banned us from their lives because of our son. My husband's brother was married around the same time, and although my in-laws see him and his children numerous times every year, they find weak excuses not to visit us.

I feel terrible for my children and my husband, although he sees nothing wrong with his parents' behavior. We've tried talking with my in-laws, educating them, reasoning with them, even begging them, but nothing has changed. They send cards and money for birthdays and

holidays, but that's it. There is no real love. Should I just give up?

Feeling Betrayed Dear Betrayed: Your in-laws have already given up on your behalf.

If cards and money are their only method of communication, accept it as such, and don't expect more. As long as this doesn't seem to bother your husband, there's no reason you should make any greater effort to involve grandparents who don't wish to be part of your children's lives. It is truly their loss. How sad.

Dear Annie: I am extremely dissatisfied with life. I am very intelligent, but I never have been able to finish my education. I have a terrible problem with math and always have had a problem concentrating. I am very easily distracted. I think I may have adult Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).



Annie's Mailbox

Dear Abby: My husband of 21 years, "Robert," made me a wonderful dinner, made love with me, and then — instead of sweet dreams — he served me with divorce papers. He treats me like a princess, but the divorce is still going through.

Robert says we have nothing in common and no longer think alike. I am confused. He tells our adult children he "loves me dearly" but will never be truly happy with me. However, he won't let go emotionally. I am still in love with him. Can you please tell me what's the right thing for me to do?

— **Hurt in California**

Dear Hurt: The right thing to do is find a therapist who can help you make sense of what has happened, help you to heal the wounds of this divorce, and go on with your life.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 60460, Los Angeles, CA 90060. Readers can email to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RINPT

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FEBOG

BAGLEM

ENMIRE

A: FOR

Jumbles SINGE CABIN UPSHOT RADIUS

Answer: What the deep-voiced guy turned into when he joined the prison quartet — **A STRIPED "BASS"**

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

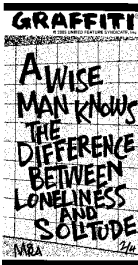
Yesterday's Jumbles SINGE CABIN UPSHOT RADIUS

Answer: What the deep-voiced guy turned into when he joined the prison quartet — **A STRIPED "BASS"**

Family Circus



"You better eat more, Sam, or you'll never grow big like Marmaduke."

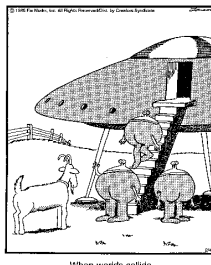


Dennis the Menace

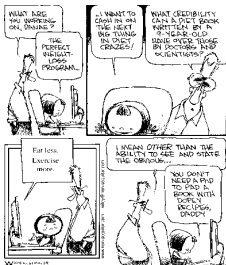


© Gary Larson

The Far Side



Non Sequitur



SCOREBOARD

AFN & Radio

Friday

AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.—Golf: FBR open, first round (dtd).

AFN-Radio, 7 p.m.—College basketball: UCLA at Washington State.

AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.—College basketball: North Carolina St. at North Carolina (dtd).

Saturday

AFN-Antenna, 1 a.m.—Pro basketball: Washington Wizards at Toronto.

AFN-Pacific, 3 a.m.—Boxing: Friday Night Fight Live: Syd Vandenberg (25-50) vs. Yusef Mack (17-2), super middleweights.

AFN-Radio and Radio, 6 a.m.—NBA: Houston at Minnesota.

AFN-Sports, 6 p.m.—Golf: FBR open, second round (dtd).

AFN-Sports, 6 p.m.—NBA: Houston at Minnesota.

AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.—College basketball: Kansas at Nebraska.

AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.—College basketball: Texas Tech at Duke.

AFN-Radio, 7 p.m.—College basketball: Georgia Tech at Duke.

AFN-Sports, 8 p.m.—College basketball: Georgia Tech at Duke.

AFN-Antenna and Radio, 11 p.m.—College basketball: UCLA at Washington.

All times are Central European Time. All listings are approximate. All listings are approximate. All listings are approximate.

Pro football

NFL playoffs

Wild-card playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 29
 St. Louis, 27, Seattle 20
 San Diego, 17, at Dallas 17

Division playoffs
Sunday, Jan. 30
 Indianapolis, 49, Denver 17
 Minnesota, 31, Green Bay 17

Conference playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 19
 Pittsburgh, 21, N.Y. Jets 17
 Atlanta, 47, at St. Louis 17

Sunday, Jan. 20
 Philadelphia, 27, Minnesota 14
 New England, 27, at Pittsburgh 17

Conference Championships
Saturday, Jan. 22
 Philadelphia, 27, Pittsburgh 17
 New England, 41, at Baltimore 17

Super Bowl
Sunday, Feb. 6
 Philadelphia vs. New England

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25 ranked

Wednesday
 1. Illinois (22-0) did not play. Next vs. Indiana, Saturday.

2. North Carolina State (17-2) did not play. Next vs. Texas Tech, Saturday.

3. Kentucky (16-2) did not play. Next vs. Wake Forest (18-3) beat No. 4 Duke 92-69. Next vs. Virginia Tech, Saturday.

4. Syracuse (20-0) did not play. Next vs. Wake Forest (18-3) beat No. 10 Louisville 77-57. Next vs. Baylor, Saturday.

5. Florida State (17-3) did not play. Next vs. Florida State, Saturday.

6. North Carolina (17-4) did not play. Next vs. Washington (17-4) did not play. Next vs. Southern California (17-4) did not play. Next vs. California (17-4) did not play. Next vs. California (17-4) did not play.

7. Oklahoma (17-4) did not play. Next vs. West Virginia (17-4) did not play. Next vs. West Virginia (17-4) did not play. Next vs. West Virginia (17-4) did not play.

8. Pittsburgh (15-4) did not play. Next vs. West Virginia (17-4) did not play. Next vs. West Virginia (17-4) did not play. Next vs. West Virginia (17-4) did not play.

9. Wisconsin (15-4) lost to No. 9 Louisville 77-57. Next at Chicago, Saturday.

10. Cincinnati (15-4) beat Northwestern 72-58. Next at Minnesota, Saturday.

11. Texas (15-5) did not play. Next vs. Iowa State, Saturday.

12. Utah (18-2) did not play. Next at San Diego State, Saturday.

13. Maryland (13-6) did not play. Next at Maryland, Saturday.

14. Connecticut (13-5) beat No. 24 Villanova 65-55. Next vs. Texas Tech, Saturday.

15. Villanova (12-5) lost to No. 23 Connecticut 65-55. Next vs. Princeton, Saturday.

16. Georgia Tech (12-6) beat Florida State 64-62. Next vs. No. 4 Washington, Saturday.

17. Baylor (17-4) beat Texas A&M 65-55. Next vs. Texas Tech, Saturday.

18. Texas Tech (17-4) beat Texas A&M 65-55. Next vs. Texas Tech, Saturday.

Clarian 72, Indiana 66
 Oregon 73, Rutgers-Camden 45
 Oregon 73, Rutgers-Camden 45
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Defalco 85, Drew 88
 Delaware Valley 69, Drexel 70
 Elizabethtown 83, Susquehanna 74

Georgetown 61, Seton Hall 61
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Hofstra 60, Val. Commonwealth 46
 Hofstra 60, Val. Commonwealth 46
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Kansas 77, Manhattanville 61
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Lehigh 58, Lehigh Valley 61
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St. Xavier 76, Ind.-South Bend 66
 Transylvania 78, Mount St. Joseph 67
 UMass 85, Worcester 57
 Wis.-Milwaukee 73, Wright St. 70

Wisconsin 78, Wisconsin 78
 Wis.-Platteville 52, Wis.-La Crosse 50
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West Chester 67, Bloomsburg 62
 Widener 78, Moravian 70
 UMass 85, Worcester 57
 Wis.-Milwaukee 73, Wright St. 70

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NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

| Atlantic Division | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| Boston | 22 | 47 | .318 |
| New York | 19 | 51 | .269 |
| New Jersey | 17 | 43 | .286 |
| Philadelphia | 19 | 43 | .309 |
| New York | 17 | 40 | .301 |

| Southeast Division | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| Miami | 33 | 14 | .702 |
| Orlando | 26 | 19 | .577 |
| Charlotte | 20 | 25 | .442 |
| Atlanta | 19 | 26 | .419 |
| Washington | 9 | 35 | .204 |

| Central Division | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| Detroit | 28 | 18 | .609 |
| Cleveland | 26 | 19 | .577 |
| Chicago | 22 | 21 | .511 |
| Indiana | 20 | 24 | .455 |
| Milwaukee | 16 | 27 | .370 |

Western Conference

| Southwest Division | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| San Antonio | 30 | 17 | .636 |
| Dallas | 30 | 16 | .652 |
| Phoenix | 26 | 20 | .565 |
| Memphis | 25 | 21 | .543 |
| New Orleans | 18 | 28 | .391 |

| Northwest Division | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| Seattle | 31 | 17 | .646 |
| Minnesota | 24 | 22 | .522 |
| Denver | 20 | 26 | .435 |
| Portland | 18 | 28 | .391 |
| Utah | 15 | 31 | .326 |

| Pacific Division | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| Phoenix | 37 | 11 | .771 |
| Sacramento | 31 | 14 | .688 |
| L.A. Lakers | 29 | 15 | .658 |
| L.A. Clippers | 27 | 13 | .676 |
| Golden State | 23 | 17 | .574 |

Wednesday's games

| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Boston 110, New Jersey 89 | 110-89 |
| Portland 77, Denver 81 | 77-81 |
| Indiana 118, Philadelphia 95 | 118-95 |
| Detroit 53, Atlanta 84 | 53-84 |
| Phoenix 101, Minnesota 79 | 101-79 |
| Dallas 95, New Orleans 82 | 95-82 |
| Portland 77, Denver 81 | 77-81 |

Thursday's games

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Cleveland 111, Golden State 107 | 111-107 |
| San Antonio 111, Golden State 107 | 111-107 |
| San Antonio 111, Golden State 107 | 111-107 |
| San Antonio 111, Golden State 107 | 111-107 |

Friday's games

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Dallas at Atlanta | |
| Atlanta at Philadelphia | |
| Washington at Toronto | |
| Orlando at Boston | |
| L.A. Clippers at Milwaukee | |
| San Antonio at Minnesota | |
| New York at Sacramento | |
| Charlotte at Portland | |
| New Orleans at Golden State | |

Saturday's games

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Detroit at New Jersey | |
| Indiana at Atlanta | |
| Washington at Washington | |
| Chicago at Miami | |
| San Antonio at New Orleans | |
| New Orleans at Utah | |
| New York at Phoenix | |
| Golden State at Denver | |
| Seattle at Seattle | |
| Sacramento at Portland | |

Wednesday

Rockets 118, 76ers 95

HOUSTON — McGrady 10-21, 9-10, 34; Van Gundy 12-24, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

Rockets 118, 76ers 95

HOUSTON — McGrady 10-21, 9-10, 34; Van Gundy 12-24, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905,

Tomjanovich steps out, says he won't coach again

Lakers would consider Jackson's return

BY JOHN NADEL
The Associated Press

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — Rudy Tomjanovich feels good about what the Los Angeles Lakers accomplished during his brief tenure as coach.

Problem is, he was unable to enjoy it while it was happening — especially in the past month when the stress of his job really got to him.

So Tomjanovich resigned Wednesday, vowing he'll never coach again.

"I was so proud of what we did. This isn't about that kind of stuff," Tomjanovich said at a news conference. "I looked at what we did and at times, I thought it was miraculous.

"A month ago, I became conscious of not feeling good. It just seemed like I got deeper and deeper into not feeling good. Why this happened now and why my body couldn't take it now, I do not have the answer."

"All I was thinking about was how to win the next damn game. I couldn't shut it off when I was away from the arena. It just kept wearing on me and wearing on me and my resistance got low and it hurt my health."

Tomjanovich went 24-19 as Phil Jackson's successor, with revamped lineup built around Kobe Bryant. The Lakers' superstar guard has been sidelined the past two games with a sprained ankle.

Included in Tomjanovich's record are the two wins the Lakers earned under assistant Frank Hamblen in games Tomjanovich missed this week because of a stomach virus.

Tomjanovich, 56, will remain with the Lakers as a consultant, mainly working as a scout.

"We respect Rudy's concerns for his health, which is of course the paramount issue," team owner Dr. Jerry Buss said in a statement.

General Manager Mitch Kupchak said Hamblen would stay on indefinitely as coach of the Lakers, but didn't rule out the return of Jackson.

The 57-year-old Hamblen, a career assistant who "be our coach going forward," Kupchak said. "Whether that changes in the next month, three months, a year, remains to be seen."

Kupchak acknowledged that Jackson's name will come up but said he hasn't been in contact with the former Lakers coach.

Not yet, at least. Kupchak also said he didn't believe there was an urgency to hire another coach.

Tomjanovich signed a \$30 million, five-year contract last summer to replace Jackson, who left after guiding the Lakers to three NBA championships and a berth in the finals in his five years on the job.

Jackson and Buss said at the time that the separation was mutual.

Tomjanovich addressed the team in an emotional meeting shortly before speaking to the media, and said the get-together with his players got quite emotional.

"I don't cry a lot. I did in that situation," he said.

"He just basically came in and poured his heart out to us," Bryant said. "We just wish him the best. He's extremely passionate, emotional. But he's a fighter. To see him down like that, it really hurt and shocked us all."

Naturally, Bryant was asked about Jackson, who wrote a tell-all book released before the season that portrayed Bryant as aloof and difficult to coach.

"Rudy's situation is a very serious situation. I can't go from that to talk about successors," Bryant said. "It really doesn't matter to me. I'm just the guy in the middle. I've said that time and time again, I love Phil as a coach."

If that's the decision, I'll roll with it."

So will Hamblen, who seems ready to handle whatever comes his way. His only other experience as a head coach came in 1991-92 when he went 23-42 with Milwaukee when Del Harris was sidelined by stomach problems.

"Phil has his lot in life. I have mine," Hamblen said. "Sure, you'd always like to be an NBA head coach. If I owned a team or was in charge, I'd want Phil Jackson also. He's got nine rings. My ego's not that big."

"If it ended tomorrow, I'd say these 36 years have been a great ride. It really hasn't sunk in yet about me being the coach of the Lakers."

Hamblen's first game in that capacity comes Thursday night, when the Lakers try to extend their winning streak to a season-high three games against the San Antonio Spurs, whose 37-10 record is the best in the NBA.

The Lakers then begin a five-game road trip Sunday at Houston.

Bryant said he hopes to play some time during the trip.

"I think this is the best decision I made and the Lakers," Tomjanovich said. "I know I did become consumed and maybe — I can't remember exactly how I was before — but I'd go for a walk and think that was an outlet. But all I thought about was basketball while I was walking."

"Maybe I'm an old general that needs to get his butt off the front line and do something else."

Tomjanovich did a good job of keeping his problems from his players.

"We didn't see it coming," Chuckie Atkins said. "He was able to hide it pretty well. I'm going to miss him."

Said Brian Grant: "When you leave the building, you're supposed to leave things here. He couldn't do that. It can make you sick, it really can."

Thomas won't leave Knicks for Lakers

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Isiah Thomas took himself out of the running for the Los Angeles Lakers' coaching job, issuing a statement Wednesday saying he was committed to remaining in his current position as president of the New York Knicks.

The Lakers' job opened up when Rudy Tomjanovich resigned, citing health issues, and Thomas name was floated as a possible candidate to be the eventual successor.

Thomas has maintained he would like to return to coaching some day, although he has ruled out being both head coach and president of the Knicks. New York has lost 14 of its past 16 games to drop from first to fourth place in the Atlantic Division. Thomas made a coaching change a week and a half ago, replacing Lenny Wilkens with Herb Williams.

"All my focus is going into rebuilding this franchise, and any intimation that I would leave my position because of the difficult stretch the team is currently going through is incorrect," said Thomas,

NBA briefs

who is on a scouting trip in Europe.

"I have a duty to the organization, to our ownership and to our fans to find ways, both short and long term, to return the Knickerbockers to a championship caliber team, and I am steadfast in that commitment."

Murphy goes on Warriors' injured list

OAKLAND, Calif. — Forward Troy Murphy went on the Golden State Warriors' injured list Wednesday with a broken left tibia.

The Warriors activated Zarko Cabarkapa from the injured list to fill the roster spot of Murphy, who was hurt in Friday night's loss to Seattle. Murphy missed Saturday's game against the Los Angeles Clippers, and the team isn't sure how long he will be out.

Murphy has averaged 16.2 points in 42 games this season, and he ranks fourth in the NBA with 11.2 rebounds per game.



Blaizers forward Theo Ratliff goes up to defend Nuggets forward Carmelo Anthony during the third quarter. Anthony was held to seven points.

Portland singles out Anthony, tops Denver

BY ANNE M. PETERSON

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Ruben Patterson got a lot of satisfaction limiting high-scoring Carmelo Anthony to just seven points.

Patterson was all over Anthony in Portland's 97-94 victory over Denver on Wednesday night, holding him to single digits for just the sixth time in his career.

"I think I got my job done," said a smiling Patterson, who has been putting emphasis on his defense as well as his offense.

Patterson got a lot of help from Theo Ratliff and Joel Przybilla.

"It was hard. If I beat Ruben, then it was Theo. And if I beat him, then it was Przybilla coming," Anthony said. "So they were making it hard for me."

Nick Van Exel scored 26 points, and Damon Stoudamire added 17 points and 10 assists to help the Trail Blazers win for the third time in five games after a six-game losing streak. Portland also snapped new Denver coach George Karl's three-game winning streak.

"You want to win them all, but if you'd told me when I started we'd be 3-1 I probably would have given you a lot of money," Karl said.

Then he turned serious: "We need to stay focused now. We can't have a lull."

Rookie Sebastian Telfair hit a three-pointer and Darius Miles — in his first game back after a two-game suspension — had a

dunk off Stoudamire's jumper to give the Trail Blazers an 81-76 lead midway through the final period.

After Van Exel made a three-pointer with 2 minutes left, Patterson's tip-in made it 89-83 for Portland, and the game slipped away from the Nuggets.

Miles was suspended by the Blazers for insubordination and conduct detrimental to the team. He entered the game early in the second quarter to a smattering of boos from the Rose Garden crowd.

Miles' suspension came after he blew up at coach Maurice Cheeks during a practice session last week. Miles later released an apology to fans, but conspicuously did not include Cheeks.

Miles said he stood by his statement. As for his relationship now with Cheeks, he said, "We're cool, he's a good man."

Stoudamire said he hoped Miles learned from the incident.

"I think we can get through it, but we need people to grow up," Stoudamire said.

Andre Miller had 27 points and nine assists for the Nuggets. The Trail Blazers held Anthony scoreless in the first half.

Anthony was 0-for-6 from the floor in the half, and 3-for-14 for the game.

"You've got to give a lot of credit to Ruben... People don't realize how well he's playing defensively," Przybilla said. "He shuts down every small forward when he's on the court. As a team we realize that."

Devil of a game

Demon Deacons just manage to hold off Blue Devils; Louisville, Connecticut also collect key league wins

The Associated Press

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Once again, Chris Paul and the rest of the Wake Forest Demon Deacons proved they belong with the big boys in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Louisville and Connecticut also came through with key victories in their respective conferences. Paul scored 23 points Wednesday night and No. 7 Wake Forest held on for a 92-89 victory over No. 4 Duke, the third straight time the Demon Deacons have downed the Blue Devils at home.

"It's not a crazy, unbelievable upset anymore when we beat a North Carolina or a Duke," Paul said. "That's because we know we can beat anyone as long as we just treat them like anyone else."

Wake Forest (18-3, 6-2 Atlantic Coast Conference) led by 14 in the second half and hung on despite J.J. Redick's 33 points.

Redick made three three-pointers in the final 2:14 and Sean Dockery also hit one. Duke cut it to 90-89 with 3 seconds to play. The Blue Devils (16-2, 6-2) had to foul and sent Taroni Downey to the line with 2 seconds left. He made both shots to make it 92-89. Redick's off-balance three-point attempt fell short at the buzzer.

Louisville (19-3, 7-1) moved into sole possession of first place in Conference USA, sealing a 77-70 victory over Cincinnati (17-4, 6-2) when freshman forward Juan Palacios banked in an unlikely three-pointer with a little more than a minute left.

Palacios finished with 17 points and 10 rebounds and Taquan Dean scored 19 to help the No. 9 Cardinals complete a two-game season sweep of the 18th-ranked Bearcats. Louisville has won eight in a row and 13 of 14.

"That was a heavyweight fight and we got the last punch," Dean said.

Eric Hicks' 21 points led Cincinnati, which has lost six of its last 10 against Louisville.

"That was a very good win," said Louisville's Francisco Garcia, who was held to 11 points, six below his average. "I'm very proud of my teammates. We're getting better every day."

Connecticut (13-5, 5-3) got 21



Connecticut's Charlie Villanueva takes aim at the basket as Jason Fraser of Villanova tries to stop him during the second half of Wednesday night's Big East game at Hartford, Conn. Connecticut defeated Villanova 81-76.

points and a key block from Rashad Anderson in the closing seconds of an 81-76 victory over No. 24 Villanova (12-5, 4-4) in a Big East game.

In coach Jim Calhoun's 1,000th game, the 23rd-ranked Huskies earned their first victory over a ranked opponent in four tries and snapped the Wildcats' three-game winning streak.

"At times, they gave us fits," Calhoun said. "Our goal was to use the size that we had. Villanova is a terrific team. They're going to be a tough out for any team that plays them."

Charlie Villanueva's free throw with 1:22 left put the Huskies ahead 73-72. Anderson blocked a shot in the lane by Randy Foye on Villanova's next possession, leading to Villanueva's hook shot on the other end and a 75-72 Connecticut lead.

No. 10 Oklahoma St. 77, Kansas St. 57: At Stillwater, Okla., Joey Graham scored 23 points and pulled down 10 rebounds, and John Lucas III had 19 points and 10 assists for Oklahoma State.

Daniel Bobik had 13 points and a career-high 11 rebounds in his return to the starting lineup, helping the Cowboys (16-3, 6-2 Big 12) extend the longest current home winning streak in the country to 26 games.

No. 14 Oklahoma 69, Texas A&M 65: At Norman, Okla., Taj Gray scored 22 of his 24 points in the second half and Oklahoma overcame a 16-point deficit.

Drew Lavender gave the Sooners (17-3, 6-1 Big 12) the lead with a three-pointer from the corner with 5:36 remaining. The Aggies (14-5, 3-5) pulled within two points with just more than a minute remaining, but Gray scored on a layup and Jason Williams and Lavender each hit free throws to help Oklahoma hold on.

Terrill Everett scored 20 points for Oklahoma, which rebounded from a surprising loss at Iowa State that snapped a 10-game winning streak.

No. 19 Wisconsin 73, Northwestern 58: At Madison, Wis., Kamron Taylor's 18 points led five Wisconsin players in double figures.

Despite the absence of leading scorer Alando Tucker for the second straight game because of a right foot injury, the Badgers (15-4, 6-2 Big Ten) led throughout in their first home game since top-ranked Illinois snapped their 38-game home winning streak last week.

No. 25 Georgia Tech 64, Florida St. 61: At Atlanta, Will Bynum made up for a poor first half by hitting a tiebreaking three-pointer with 2.7 seconds left for Georgia Tech (13-4, 4-1 Atlantic Coast Conference), which needed the victory badly after losing four of its previous five.

Bynum, who missed seven of eight shots in the opening half, finished with 19 points. He hit the game-winner after Florida State had made up a 12-point deficit by going on a 19-7 run, tying it 61-61 on a three-pointer by Von Weaver with 1:29 remaining.



Bode Miller makes a turn on one ski during the downhill portion of the men's combined on Thursday in the World Alpine Ski Championships at Bormio, Italy. Despite losing a ski near the top of the course, Miller skied much of the way down on one leg before falling near the bottom.

Austrian wins gold after Miller mishap

BY ANDREW DAMPF

The Associated Press

BORMIO, Italy — Austria's Benjamin Raich won the combined in the Alpine World Ski Championships on Thursday, his first victory in a major international meet. Defending champion Bode Miller was eliminated after losing a ski in the downhill.

Raich, the bronze medalist in Saturday's super-G won by Miller, was fifth after the opening downhill leg and took the lead with the fastest time in the first of two slalom runs. He concluded the grueling day-long event by coasting to victory with the seventh-fastest time in the final slalom leg, run under the lights.

"It was a great day for me," Raich said. "I made a good downhill run and also had decent slalom runs."

Raich's combined time on the Slvelvo course was 3 minutes, 19.10 seconds. Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal earned the silver medal, 0.91 seconds behind, and Italy's Giorgio Rocca won the bronze, 0.98 back. Austria's Michael Walchhofer, the leader after the downhill portion, was fourth.

Svindal and Rocca had to wait a few minutes to learn where they finished while officials examined tape. They eventually ruled that Kjetil Andre Aamodt of Norway straddled a gate midway through his final run. Aamodt was second until being disqualified.

"I wasn't sure if I straddled, I couldn't tell. That's why I continued," Aamodt said. Raich, winner of 15 races in his World Cup career, won the bronze medal in the combined in

the 2002 Olympics and captured the only World Cup combined race this season, at Wengen, Switzerland. He entered the combined as a co-favorite with Miller, the only skier he trails in the overall World Cup standings.

Miller's ski loosened just after he landed a short jump on the top part of the downhill course. To the delight of the fans, the American completed most of the course on one ski, dropping into a tuck position on occasion. He eventually fell to the snow in exhaustion shortly before the finish.

"I felt fine," Miller said. "There was nothing I could do. The binding was fine."

World Championships

Men's Combined
At Bormio, Italy
Slvelvo course

1. Benjamin Raich, Austria, 3 minutes, 19.10 seconds (1:53.46-75.39-38.6)
2. Aksel Lund Svindal, Norway, 3:20.01 (1:56.48-75.39-38.6)
3. Giorgio Rocca, Italy, 3:20.08 (1:56.48-75.39-38.6)
4. Michael Walchhofer, Austria, 3:20.55 (1:56.48-75.39-38.6)
5. Silvan Zurbriggen, Switzerland, 3:20.98 (1:53.76-75.39-38.6)
6. Lasse Kjus, Norway, 3:21.34 (1:53.76-75.39-38.6)
7. Daniel Albrecht, Switzerland, 3:21.37 (1:54.17-75.39-38.6)
8. Martin Vrablic, France, 3:21.53 (1:54.42-75.39-38.6)
9. John Kucera, Canada, 3:22.73 (1:53.71-75.39-38.6)
10. Francois Bourque, Canada, 3:22.90 (1:53.99-75.39-38.6)

Also

12. Ted Ligety, United States, 3:23.95 (1:57.30-75.39-38.6)
- Bode Miller, United States, and Kyrstyn Kja, Czech Republic, failed to finish the downhill.
- Martin Vrablic, Czech Republic, was disqualified in the downhill.
- Roger Grubb, Britain, and Erik Guay, Canada, did not start the slalom.
- Kurt End, Austria, and Marc Bend, Switzerland, Alexander Horoslov, Russia, and Sergei Komarov, Russia, did not finish the slalom run.
- Kjetil Andre Aamodt, Norway, was disqualified in the second slalom run.

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Bettman, Goodenow are retreating to talks

NHL commissioner, union chief invited back after latest rejected plan

BY IRA PODELL

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Gary Bettman and Bob Goodenow are returning to the bargaining table. Optimism is still absent from negotiations aimed at ending the NHL lockout.

The commissioner and union chief will attend Thursday's negotiating session in New York, one day after the players' association rejected the league's latest salary-cap proposal.

Nearly five months into the lockout, the NHL says there is no other solution. And now time is about to run out.

"We're at the end time-wise in terms of being able to continue this process and still play games this season, so there's not a lot of room for flexibility," says NHL chief legal officer Bill Daly said.

The union needed only a few hours in Newark, N.J., on Wednesday to turn down the proposal to place arbitrators and maximums on what the 30 clubs

can spend on player costs. That didn't quite put an end to the hope for hockey, but it sure pushed that prospect to the forefront.

"I don't want to mislead anyone and suggest I'm optimistic," players' association senior director Ted Saska said. "There is nothing over the last few years in the way they've approached things that would lead me to have any sense of optimism."

But the union immediately invited the league back to the table, and wanted commissioner Bettman and Goodenow to join the discussions for the first time since Dec. 14. There were no less than 100 negotiating sessions without the two leaders the past two weeks.

"We've gone as far as we can go in our small-group setting and we think it's important to have Bob and Gary join us," NHLPA senior director Ted Saska said.

But what does it all mean? The NHL is committed to getting cost certainty, and the players' associa-

tion vows to never accept a salary cap that is no settlement soon, who knows how long the stalemate will last.

"There's no particular sense of optimism here," Daly said.

The framework is still something that they have continuously suggested that they are not willing to accept."

So it makes sense to get Bettman and Goodenow involved as the days dwindle. There can't be a deal without them signing off on it, so keeping the leaders away no longer serves a real purpose.

"I think we have created a more open dialogue and I would expect that that will continue with them in the room," Daly said.

It is unclear what will happen Thursday when Bettman and Daly join Goodenow and Saska, with a lawyer on each side. The way things have gone, there might not be time for the parties to reach an agreement to save the 2005-06 season.

"There isn't much in this offer that's attractive to us or that we consider fair or necessary for the sport," Saska said.

The lockout reached its 140th day Wednesday, and has forced the cancellation of 762 of the 1,230 regular-season games, plus the All-Star Game. The NHL is in danger of becoming the first major North American sports league to lose an entire season to a labor dispute.

The NHL proposed a six-year deal that contained a cap that would force teams to spend at least \$32 million on player costs but no more than \$42 million — including benefits.

It won't be presented to the players for a full vote, since Saska said the offer is nowhere near what the association is looking for.

Bettman has said that teams lost more than \$1.8 billion over 10 years and that management will not agree to a deal without a definitive relationship between revenue and salaries.



Sammy Sosa

Baltimore suits Sosa already

By David Ginsburg

The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — He signed autographs, praised manager Lee Mazzilli and took great care in avoiding use of the word "I" when discussing his goals for this year. Still smarting from the backlash of his final days with the Chicago Cubs, Sammy Sosa was determined to make a good first impression with the Baltimore Orioles on Wednesday. He really didn't have to try so hard, because the Orioles clearly were delighted to have him on their side.

The trade that sent Sosa from the Cubs became official after Commissioner Bud Selig approved the deal and the slugger passed his physical. Chicago received second baseman Jerry Hairston Jr. and two minor leaguers, second baseman Mike Fontenot and right-handed pitcher Dave Crouthers.

Sosa, 36, has 574 home runs, seventh on the career list, and will certainly hit them when the exclusive 600-home run club this season. He insisted that reaching the milestone is secondary to becoming an integral part of his new club.

"The 600 is going to come. What's important to me is to have a great relationship with my manager and the whole team," he said. "I'm not thinking about 600. I'm thinking about being comfortable, relaxed and to be loved again."

Sosa was once revered in Chicago, but the relationship between him and the fans began to deteriorate two years ago when he was caught using a corked bat. Last season was worse — Sosa complained about being dropped to sixth and righting order by manager Dusty Baker and waded out on the team before the conclusion of the final game.

The Cubs didn't want to go through more of the same this year, so they literally paid the Orioles to take him off their hands.

"I feel sad that it had to end the way that it did," Cubs General Manager Jim Hendry said. "Obviously, he made some mistakes late in the year. But he really deserves a second chance that has been cast upon him the last couple of months."

Chicago made an immediate move to shore up its lineup, agreeing to a one-year contract with Jeremy Burnitz that guarantees the outfielder \$5 million.

Ball from Sox's Series win headed to Fenway

The Associated Press

BOSTON — The baseball used to make the final out in the Red Sox' World Series triumph last night is coming home to Fenway Park, through the ownership of the ball remains in dispute.

The ball, claimed by both the team and the player who caught it, will arrive in Boston by armored car Thursday and then be carried down Yawkey Way and into Fenway Park's Hall of Fame Club, where it was to be presented to Red Sox President Larry Lucchino.

Backup first baseman Doug Mientkiewicz has kept the ball since Oct. 27, when he caught a throw from pitcher Keith Foulke to record the final out of the Red Sox' 3-0 win over the St. Louis Cardinals, securing Boston's first World Series title in 86 years.

The team asked him to hand over the ball last month. Mientkiewicz, who was traded last week to the New York Mets, declined. But he said he and the team reached a cordial agreement to display the ball, and make it part of a victory tour.

"I want the fans to see it," he said. "They waited a long time to get that ball and to live it."

GM Jockety agrees to 3-year contract with Cardinals

ST. LOUIS — Cardinals General Manager Walt Jockety agreed Wednesday to a three-year contract, less than a month after manager Tony La Russa also accepted a new deal that runs through 2007.

Jockety, 53, who received two awards as Major League Baseball's executive of the year in 2004, has been without a contract since Dec. 31. St. Louis is coming off its first World Series appearance since 1987, and Jockety

Sports briefs

said last week he had been approached by other clubs wondering if he would leave the Cardinals.

St. Louis also confirmed the new contract for La Russa, who had announced his deal Jan. 8. The Cardinals have been to the playoffs five times in nine years under La Russa.

German soccer federation: four matches fixed

BERLIN — Four German league games were fixed and at least 14 players were involved in a betting scam that has rocked the country as it prepares for the 2006 World Cup, soccer authorities said Thursday.

Robert Hoyzer, the referee at the heart of the widening scandal, implicated three other referees, the German soccer federation said.

The federation said Hoyzer officiated four rigged games: two regional games, a second-division game and a German Cup game between first-division Hamburger SV and third-division Paderborn.

International soccer's governing body has told Germany to resolve this case quickly, with the sport's showcase event a little more than 16 months away. For the first time, federation officials were able to examine files of the probe investigation.

Berlin prosecutors have said four referees and 14 players were among 25 people suspected of fixing at least 10 games. On Thursday, authorities identified Romanos Legentis-Aurelio, Reghecampas as one of the players. He started the season with Energie Cottbus and moved midseason to

Almannia Aachen, another second-division club.

Police raided the homes of 19 people Wednesday and seized bank accounts and property worth about \$3.17 million. There were no arrests.

Hoyzer has admitted taking money from a Croatian-controlled betting ring to rig at least four games. He also accused referee Jurgen Jansen and Dominik Marks of rigging two games each, the federation said. He also implicated a third referee, Felix Zwayer.

Jansen, whose home was searched, was in charge of the only Bundesliga game believed to be involved. Jansen, who has refereed 147 Bundesliga games, told the Passauer Neue Presse newspaper: "I didn't do what I'm accused of. Let me fall over dead if that's not true."

The federation defended its decision to suspend the three referees, saying they are under suspicion in the police investigation and had been implicated by Hoyzer.

Federation co-president Theo Zwanziger said the number of players who admitted involvement in the fixing was growing. The federation has been accused of ignoring warnings from bookmakers several months ago. Zwanziger insisted his group is "in the position to delve deep into criminal activities."

Davenport opens with victory in Pan Pacific Open

TOKYO — Top-ranked Lindsay Davenport began her title defense in the Pan Pacific Open on Thursday, beating Japan's Shiori Obata 6-4, 6-2 in a second-round match.

Davenport, seeking her fifth Pan Pacific title, was playing her

first singles match since losing to Serena Williams in the Australian Open final Saturday.

Russians Elena Likhovtseva and Elena Dementieva also advanced.

The third-seeded Likhovtseva beat American Jill Craybas 7-5, 4-6, 6-2, and the fourth-seeded Dementieva routed Japan's Akiko Moriyama 6-1, 6-2.

In other second-round matches, Iveta Benesova of the Czech Republic downed Japan's Aiko Nakamura 3-6, 7-5, 6-4, while eighth-seeded Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia recovered from a slow start to defeat Russia's Maria Kirilenko 4-6, 6-2.

Pierce dismissed from Iowa basketball team

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Iowa basketball star Pierre Pierce was kicked off the team Wednesday while under investigation by West Des Moines police for intent to commit sexual abuse, burglary and other crimes at the home of a former girlfriend.

"Effective immediately, Pierre Pierce has been dismissed from the University of Iowa men's basketball team," coach Steve Alford said in a statement. "I regret this step has become necessary, but Pierre has betrayed the trust we placed in him when he was given a second chance two years ago."

In 2002, Pierce was charged with third-degree sexual abuse. He later pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of assault causing injury, but was not charged with the crime which it was handled by university administrators triggered two faculty-led inquiries.

Pierce received a deferred judgment, so the charge was erased from his record after he successfully completed a year of probation, counseling and 200 hours of community service.

Jury finds man guilty of paying for recruit

By WOODY BAIRD
The Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — A federal jury convicted a multimillion-dollar businessman Lang Young on Wednesday of paying \$150,000 to get a top football recruit for Alabama.

The jury deliberated for 5½ hours before returning a verdict. Young, 64, was convicted of conspiracy to commit racketeering (by breaking state bribery laws), crossing state lines to commit racketeering and arranging bank withdrawals to cover up a crime.

Young could receive prison time and a large fine. The charges carry a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison, but federal guidelines call for a lighter sentence.

Defense attorneys used closing arguments to highlight the chief accused's history of lying and the legal standard for "reasonable doubt."

But prosecutors said bank and phone records bolstered the testimony of their law witness, former Trezevant High School head coach Lynn Lang.

Lang testified that Young bribed him with a series of cash payments below the \$10,000 threshold for IRS reporting to get highly recruited defensive lineman Albert Means to sign with Alabama in 2000.

Lang told jurors he got money from two other colleges — Georgia and Kentucky — and offers of cash, jobs or free law school from Arkansas, Memphis, Mississippi, Michigan State and Tennessee.

Former coaches Rip Scherer of

Millionaire businessman Lang Young was convicted Wednesday of paying \$150,000 to get a top football recruit for Alabama.

Memphis and Jim Donnan of Georgia, and former Alabama assistant try Williams testified for the defense that Lang was lying. Lang has pleaded guilty to conspiracy in the case and is cooperating with prosecutors as he awaits sentencing.

Defense lawyer James Neal told the jury that Lang lied about Means' recruitment to the NCAA, Memphis school officials and others before testifying.

Lead prosecutor Assistant U.S. Attorney Fred Godwin introduced telephone records from June 2000 to February 2001 showing 49 calls between phones belonging to Lang and Young.

He also put on testimony about a series of cash withdrawals from Young's bank accounts, some only a day apart and totaling more than \$270,000, and deposits by Lang of more than \$47,000.

Means, who has not been accused of wrongdoing, also testified for the prosecution. He admitted that someone took his college entrance exam for him, an idea that Lang said came from Williams, and that he let his high school coach pick his college.

Means spent a year at Alabama before transferring to Memphis when reports of payoffs to Lang became public.

Southern Cowboys again Two-time defending national champions judged to have country's top recruiting class for second straight year

By RALPH D. RUSSO
The Associated Press

Southern California finished recruiting with a flourish.

Several blue chip prospects who entered signing day uncommitted ended it headed to USC as the two-time defending national champions continued to stockpile talent Wednesday.

Rivals.com has the Trojans' class rated No. 1 in the nation, just like last year.

It's been a hallmark of ours, getting great classes and putting them together one after the other, which has allowed us to reach the level of success we have," USC coach Pete Carroll said.

Unlike last year, the Trojans weren't a consensus No. 1 among the leading recruiting analysts — but they were ranked. Max Effinger ranked USC second behind Oklahoma, Allen Wallace of SuperPrep and Scout.com put USC No. 3, with Tennessee first and Michigan second. The Trojans were third behind Nebraska and Tennessee, according to Tom Lemming of ESPN.com and College Sports Television.

USC landed two of the nation's best linebackers (Brian Cushing from New Jersey and Landon Brown from California) and two of the top defensive linemen (Walker Ashlee from Minnesota and Kyle Moore from Georgia) on Wednesday. All four were uncommitted when the day started.

"It looked like it might not have been their year, but it turned on a dime," Bobby Burton of Rivals.com said of the Trojans. "We have back-to-back No. 1-ranked recruiting classes is unheard of."

Quarterback Mark Sanchez and linebacker Rey Maualuga from California and wide receiver Patrick Turner from Tennessee highlight the Trojans' class.

Sanchez will have to sit behind Heisman Trophy winner Matt Leinart, who he decided to return for his senior season despite having the chance to be the No. 1 pick in the upcoming NFL Draft.

Carroll's reputation for playing freshmen keeps the Trojans' already loaded roster from scaring away the best high school players in the country.

"We had players of the year from four states and others who are coming to do something special," Carroll said. "They're not concerned about depth charts, just about opportunity."

Oklahoma's 55-19 loss to USC in the Orange Bowl last month didn't hurt the Sooners in recruiting. The Sooners' two prized recruits were on the defensive side.

Tackle DeMarcus Granger from Texas and linebacker Ryan Reynolds from Nevada were considered among the best defensive players in the country.

"This class met our needs, and I am especially happy about the quantity and quality of the linemen on both sides of the ball," Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said. We needed to do well there, and we did."

Like USC, Florida State closed strong and joined perennial powers Michigan, Georgia and Miami with highly rated classes. But also

Texas on several players and came away with the school's best recruiting class in years.

"We want to be able to recruit the best in the nation," Franchione said. "We want to continue to enhance our image nationally."

The Vols haven't had a class regarded this highly since 2000, when coach Phillip Fulmer brought in a group that included linebacker Kevin Burnett, offensive lineman Jason Respert and Michael Munoz, tight end Jason Witten and quarterback Casey Clausen.

Rating the recruiting classes

The top 10 recruiting classes as rated by four of the top recruiting analysts:

| Max Effinger | Tom Lemming | Allen Wallace | Rivals.com |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Oklahoma | ESPN.com/College Sports | Super Prep and Scout.com | 1. Southern Cal |
| 2. Southern Cal | 1. Nebraska | 1. Tennessee | 2. Oklahoma |
| 3. Tennessee | 2. Tennessee | 2. Michigan | 3. Tennessee |
| 4. Florida State | 3. Southern Cal | 3. Southern Cal | 4. Florida State |
| 5. Nebraska | 4. Michigan | 4. Florida State | 5. Nebraska |
| 6. Texas A&M | 5. Iowa | 5. Nebraska | 6. Michigan |
| 7. Florida | 6. Georgia | 6. Nebraska | 7. Oklahoma |
| 8. Georgia | 7. Texas A&M | 7. Florida | 8. Georgia |
| 9. Miami | 8. Ohio State | 8. Ohio State | 9. Texas A&M |
| 10. Michigan | 10. Virginia Tech | 10. Iowa | 10. California |

cracking the top 10s were Nebraska and Texas A&M, two schools trying to return to the nation's elite.

Nebraska coach Bill Callahan did particularly well recruiting the junior colleges. It's a class that might have an immediate impact on the Cornhuskers, who were 5-6 last season.

"A year from now, everyone will be talking about this Nebraska class as their greatest in the last 25 years," Lemming said.

Texas A&M coach Dennis Franchione, heading into his third season with the Aggies, went head-to-head with Oklahoma and

"They're happy to familiar ground," Wallace said.

The Volunteers signed 27 players on the first and busiest day of the national signing period, and went into the Midwest and all over the South for top prospects.

"You have to do that at Tennessee, where you don't have that hometown talent," Burton said.

Coming off a 10-3 season, the Vols seemed determined to sell with Raymond Henderson from Wisconsin, linebacker Andre Mathis from Pennsylvania, defensive back Adam Myers-White from Ohio, and linebacker Rick McCoy from Washington, D.C. All were among the best players at their positions nationally.

Tennessee's top-rated recruit, cornerback DeMetrius Morley, is from Miami.

"The University of Tennessee is a great product to sell with the traditions, facilities and academic support," Fulmer said. "If we can get them to campus, then we've got a chance to sign them."

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Where the top prospects went

The top 10 high school players as rated by four of the top recruiting analysts (school of choice in parentheses):

1. Derrick Williams, Atlanta, 6-foot-1, 187 pounds, Roosevelt, Md. (Penn State)
2. Ryan Perrilloux, WR, 6-5, 220, Nashville, Tenn. (USC)
3. Justin Kimbrell, TE, 6-7, 245, Plainfield, N.J. (Virginia)
4. Melvin Alazra, DE, 6-7, 237, Randallstown, Md. (Maryland)
5. Ray Lewis, LB, 6-3, 260, Garfield, Calif. (USC)
6. Fred Rouse, WR, 6-4, 190, Tallahassee, Fla. (Florida State)
7. Mark Sanchez, QB, 6-4, 215, Mission Viejo, Calif. (USC)
8. Marcus Bennett, TE, 6-7, 245, Dallas, Texas (Texas A&M)
9. Reggie Williams, RB, 5-10, 225, Houston, Texas (USC)
10. Jonathan Stewart, RB, 5-10, 225, Astoria, Ore. (Oregon)

- SuperPrep/Scout.com, Allen Wallace**
1. Eugene Monroe, DT, 6-5, 315, Plainfield, N.J. (Penn State)
 2. Mark Sanchez, QB, 6-4, 215, Mission Viejo, Calif. (USC)
 3. Patrick Turner, WR, 6-1, 187, Southfield, Mich. (Penn State)
 4. Mark Sanchez, QB, 6-4, 215, Mission Viejo, Tenn. (USC)
 5. Ryan Perrilloux, RB, 6-5, 220, Nashville, Tenn. (USC)
 6. Brian Cushing, LB, 6-3, 230, Orange, N.J. (USC)
 7. Justin Kimbrell, TE, 6-7, 245, Plainfield, N.J. (Penn State)
 8. DeMarcus Granger, DT, 6-7, 235, Dallas, Oklahoma (Alabama)
 9. Antonio Smith, DE, 5-10, 245, Long Beach, Calif. (Florida State)
 10. Fred Rouse, WR, 6-4, 190, Tallahassee, Fla. (Florida State)

- Max Effinger**
1. Ryan Perrilloux, RB, 6-5, 220, Nashville, Tenn. (USC)
 2. Jonathan Stewart, RB, 5-10, 225, Astoria, Ore. (Penn State)
 3. Derrick Williams, DT, 6-7, 245, Plainfield, N.J. (Virginia)
 4. Mark Sanchez, QB, 6-4, 215, Mission Viejo, Calif. (USC)
 5. Patrick Turner, WR, 6-1, 187, Southfield, Mich. (Penn State)
 6. Fred Rouse, WR, 6-4, 190, Tallahassee, Fla. (Florida State)
 7. Melvin Alazra, DE, 6-7, 237, Randallstown, Md. (Maryland)
 8. Marcus Bennett, TE, 6-7, 245, Dallas, Texas (Texas A&M)
 9. Reggie Williams, RB, 5-10, 225, Houston, Texas (USC)
 10. Ryan Reynolds, LB, 6-2, 220, Las Vegas, Nevada (Alabama)

Ryan Perrilloux, a quarterback from Resene, La., considered by analysts to be a consensus top-20 player, signed with LSU. He had only committed to Texas.

Philadelphia 'Freak's

Acquisition of DE Kearsse helped Eagles take next step

By ROB MAADDI
The Associated Press

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Jevon Kearsse is stronger than most linemen, faster than some running backs and so quick off his first step that he's been known to slip around blockers untouched.

In this league, where jaw-dropping athleticism is never more than a locker away, Kearsse stands out so much that his nickname is "The Freak."

On defense, Kearsse has almost equaled the impact Terrell Owens had on the offense in both players' first season with the Philadelphia Eagles. A disruptive force on the field, Kearsse significantly bolstered the pass rush and solidified one of the best defenses in the NFL.

Now comes Philadelphia's biggest challenge: Stopping Tom Brady and the New England Patriots in the Super Bowl.

"All across the line, they've got the O-line, tight ends, receivers, quarterback, running back. They have all the goods," Kearsse said Wednesday. "In a situation like that, you have no choice but to go in and give them all you have."

Kearsse already played in one Super Bowl, a gut-wrenching loss to St. Louis in his rookie season with Tennessee. He spent part of this week giving his teammates advice on handling the pressures of playing in the big game.

"Me and Dorsey (Levens) had to remind everybody that this trip is only fun when you win," Kearsse said.

Eagles defensive coordinator Jim Johnson utilized Kearsse's speed by playing him at both end spots and sometimes at linebacker, confounding quarterbacks and the offensive line.

Philadelphia finished second in the league with 47 sacks, including 7½ from Kearsse, who didn't play the last two regular-season games because the Eagles had al-



Defensive end Jevon Kearsse, who signed as a free agent during the offseason, accounted for 7½ of the Eagles' 47 sacks this season.

ready clinched the No. 1 seed in the NFC.

A first-round pick in 1999, Kearsse spent five years with the Titans, establishing himself as one of the NFL's premier sack artists. He signed a \$66 million, eight-year contract with the Eagles on the first day of the free agency period last March, hoping to get another chance to win a championship.

"This is what every player wants," Kearsse said. "I know how much this team has been through the last four years, knocking on the door but not getting in. This

year, we want to get through the door, run through the house and out the back door. Now that we're here, we have to cash in."

Kearsse and the rest of Philly's defense were overwhelmed by Donovan McNabb, Terrell Owens and a high-powered offense. But, no team was tougher to score against when the games mattered. The Eagles gave up the fewest points (222) in the first 15 games, before the reserves gave up 38 in the meaningless regular-season finale against Cincinnati.

Johnson, who has a knack for

confusing quarterbacks and shutting down prolific offenses with his complex schemes, is busy cooking up another one of his innovative game plans to stop the Patriots.

Some of the best quarterbacks in the league had a tough time against the Eagles this season.

Brett Favre had his worst game in Philadelphia. Daunte Culpepper struggled in the playoffs against the Eagles. Michael Vick never had a chance in the NFC championship game.

If Brady has time to throw, he's going against a secondary that includes All-Pro free safety Brian Dawkins, Pro Bowl strong safety Michael Lewis, All-Pro cornerback Lito Sheppard and cornerback Sheldon Brown, who probably was Philadelphia's most consistent defensive back.

Sheppard and Brown quickly earned respect with a strong performance against Minnesota's Randy Moss in Week 2. They silenced critics who thought the Eagles would miss five-time Pro Bowl cornerback Troy Vincent and nine-year starter Bobby Taylor.

Middle linebacker Jeremiah Trotter solidified the run defense, which had been Philadelphia's only weakness, when he became a starter midway through the season. Trotter, who began the year playing special teams, was so dominant he earned his third trip to the Pro Bowl after making just seven starts.

Trotter, along with defensive tackles Corey Simon, Darwin Walker, Hollis Thomas and Sam Rayburn, are the key to stopping New England's Corey Davis, who ran for 1,635 yards and 12 TDs.

"There's a lot to be concerned about with those guys," said Brady, who has been MVP of two Super Bowls in the past three years. "They have playmakers at every position. They can force you to turn the ball over. They are very explosive on defense and you usually don't hear that."

Patriots' Seymour practices, should play in Super Bowl

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — All-Pro defensive lineman Richard Seymour completed his first full practice in nearly two weeks Wednesday and should play for New England in the Super Bowl against Philadelphia.

"He did everything we asked him to do, so he's good to go," coach Bill Belichick said.

Seymour, an All-Pro the past two years and a Pro Bowler in three of his four years in the NFL, injured his left knee Dec. 26 against the New York Jets and missed the past three games, two in the postseason. Jarvis Green started in Seymour's absence, recording 15 tackles, a sack and a fumble.

Seymour has been one of the big playmakers for New England the past two seasons. He had five



sacks and a forced fumble this year, and returned a Drew Bledsoe fumble 68 yards for a touchdown against Buffalo.

A co-captain on defense, Seymour plays both ends in the 3-4 defense and tackle in pass-rushing situations.

In some respects, he is the defensive equivalent of Terrell Owens, the Philadelphia wide receiver who said Tuesday he will play after being out since Dec. 19 with an ankle injury. Asked earlier in the week if he compared himself to Owens, the soft-spoken Seymour laughed and replied: "We're the exact opposite."

Meanwhile, linebacker Ted

Johnson returned to practice and did not appear to have any problems from a leg injury that kept him out Monday.

The field was in better shape, too.

Belichick complained about loud footing at Barran High School on Monday, but said conditions had improved.

"We were slipping on it, but not like Monday," he said.

Garrett hired as Dolphins QB coach

DAVIE, Fla. — The Miami Dolphins hired Jason Garrett as quarterbacks coach Wednesday.

Garrett played with three NFL teams over a 12-year career that culminated in a six-game stint with the Dolphins in 2004. Best known for being Troy Aikman's backup in Dallas during the

1990s, Garrett threw his last NFL season in 1999.

In parts of four career games, Garrett completed 165 of 294 passes for 2,042 yards with 11 touchdowns and five interceptions.

Also Wednesday, wide receiver Kendall Newson signed a one-year deal to return to the team. Newson spent the 2004 season on injured reserve, after tearing his left Achilles' tendon in a preseason game Aug. 14 against Jacksonville. He caught two passes for 55 yards in his rookie season two years ago.

CB Surtain gets OK from Miami to seek trade

MIAMI — Miami Dolphins cornerback Patrick Surtain has received permission to seek a trade because the team is poised to reach about reaching agreement on a contract extension, his agent said.

NFL sources: RBE. Smith set to retire

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — NFL career rushing leader Emmitt Smith is retiring after 15 years, two sources within the NFL said.

Smith, who starred for the Dallas Cowboys for 13 seasons and spent the past two years with Arizona, will make the announcement in the afternoon at the site of the Super Bowl, according to the sources, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

He is expected to sign a one-day contract with Dallas so he can retire as a Cowboy. Dallas owner Jerry Jones will be at the ceremony.

The 35-year-old Smith ran for 18,355 yards and 164 touchdowns in his career, both NFL records. He rushed for 937 yards and nine touchdowns for the Cardinals this season.

He was more consistent than spectacular, a running back who could be relied on to get tough yards.

He rushed for 1,000 yards or more every year between 1991 and 2001. He led the NFL in rushing in 1991, 1992 and 1995 and in touchdowns in three seasons.

But despite his impressive statistics, he won just two major awards in 15 seasons — NFL MVP in 1993 and the Super Bowl MVP that same season, when he rushed for 130 yards and two touchdowns in the Cowboys' 30-13 win over Buffalo in Atlanta.

He won those despite missing the first two games of that season in a contract dispute with Jones. Smith finished that regular season with perhaps his greatest game, an overtime win over the New York Giants at the Meadowlands.

Smith separated his shoulder in the third quarter but returned to the game. He carried the ball on nine of the Cowboys' 11 plays in the extra period.

He finished with 229 total yards and a touchdown on 32 carries and 10 receptions, the heaviest workload in team history, then spent the night in a hospital.

Surtain, a three-time Pro Bowl selection, would cost the Dolphins more than \$8.3 million against the salary cap in 2005, the final year of his contract. The team has until March 2 to cut \$17 million off the cap and can save a little more than \$6 million by trading Surtain.

Agent Gary Usterline worked for two years on a contract extension with Surtain. At an impasse, Usterline said he received approval Monday from Dolphins general manager Rick Spielman to pursue a trade.

Usterline is going to reach our energy and focus to trying to arrange a trade," Usterline said. The Dolphins and new coach Nick Saban declined to comment Wednesday on the contract negotiations he said he had face difficult decisions because of the salary cap situation he inherited.

SPORTS



Trojans land several
blue-chip prospects
on signing day, Page 29

Pats' subs emerge

Vet Harrison provides DBs a safety net

BY JIMMY GOLEN
The Associated Press

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — The New England Patriots ended last year's Super Bowl with two subs in the secondary.

This year, they're starting the game that way.

The Patriots will face the Philadelphia Eagles with a patchwork defensive backfield that features a converted receiver, an undrafted free agent and a guy who was out of football most of the year.

"We've got a lot of talented guys on our defense that are really versatile," linebacker Willie McGinest said. "I think that's what makes us so special."

It goes beyond the secondary. Most of the linebackers played on the defensive line in college.

"If you're backing up a guy, you've got to definitely be ready to step in at any time," McGinest said. "First string, second string — whatever — everybody gets reps, everybody prepares hard, everybody understands the game plan because we've been in situations in the last few years where you have two guys go down and other guys step in and play really well."

The Patriots won their second NFL title in three years last season, holding off the Carolina Panthers in the Super Bowl despite losing both safeties during the game — Rodney Harrison to a broken arm and Eugene Wilson to a groin injury.

This year, the problem is with the cornerbacks. Tyrone Poole was injured in Week 3, and Ty Law, a four-time Pro Bowl selection, went out four games later.

The Patriots have since subbed and shuffled and managed to finish 14-2 for the second consecutive season. In the playoffs, they shut down NFL MVP Peyton Manning and rookie of the year Ben Roethlisberger in back-to-back weeks.

Harrison and Wilson have settled in at safety, with rookie Randall Gay and Asante Samuel at the corners, backed up by wide receiver Troy Brown and Hank Poteat, a former Steelers special teams player who had gone back to get his college degree when the Patriots signed him last month.

The defensive line features end Richard Seymour, an All-Pro who missed the last three games with a leg injury. McGinest plays linebacker with Ted Johnson, Mike Vrabel and Teddy Bruschi, who



New England Patriots safety Rodney Harrison returns an interception 87 yards for a touchdown in AFC Championship game. Harrison "is the glue of our secondary," said rookie cornerback Randall Gay.

was added to the Pro Bowl this week.

"Guys like that, most teams would die to have," Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb said. "No one really talks about them."

Instead, most of the attention has been paid to the secondary

and its struggles to make it from week to week. The one constant has been Harrison.

"Rodney is the glue of our secondary," said Gay, who went from an undrafted free agent to starter because of the injuries.

"He has more experience than all of us together."

Harrison passed that on to his teammates.

"Right after Ty got hurt, he came to me and told me that I was the starter and that he expected me to play like a starter. ... He would always tell me, 'If you want

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Seventh-ranked Wake Forest hangs on to knock off rival Duke

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Sosa, looking 'to be loved again,' officially joins Orioles

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Tomjanovich vows he won't return to coaching again

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